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ABSTRACT

Nine papers presented at an Irish Association for Applied Linguistics (IRAAL) seminar on research in progress in applied linguistics in Ireland are included in this volume. Papers and authors are as follows: "Nuclear Prominence in Hiberno English: A Preliminary Investigation" (Rosemary O'Halpin); "The Translatability of Nil Equivalence Terms" (Ignacio Hernandez Lasa); "Deixis and Translation" (Bill Richardson); "Exploration, Challenge, and Change in the Teaching of Irish at Post-Primary Level" (Muiris O Laoire); "The Year Abroad--A Linguistic Challenge" (Riana Walsh); "Syntactic Typology and 'Free Word Order' in Cushitic" (John Ibrahim Saeed); "L2 Motivation as a Qualitative Construct" (Ema Ushioda); "The Introduction of Irish as a Target Language to the Eurotra Machine Translation System" (Dorothy Kenny); and "Developing Strategies and Attitudes" (Rosa Ma Lopez Boullon). (JL)

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TEANGA 14

Bliainiris na Teangeolaíochta Feidhmí in Éirinn
The Irish Yearbook of Applied Linguistics

EAGARTHÓIR/EDITOR: DÓNALL P. Ó BAOILL

IRAAL

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EAGARTHÓIR/EDITOR: DÓNALL P. Ó BAOILL

IRAAL

An chéad chló/*First edition, 1994*

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An tEagarthóir,
Márta, 1994.

Introduction

IRAAL intends publishing TEANGA in a different format in the future. The page size will be changed from A5 to B5 starting with this issue. An increase in the volume of applied research and lack of space are the main reasons for the change. This is a special issue on the theme ***Research in Progress in Applied Linguistics in Ireland****. Nine of the articles were delivered at an IRAAL seminar on this topic in May, 1993. The remaining article deals with theoretical linguistics and was delivered in November, 1992. We would like to extend our thanks to Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann for providing us with desktop and typesetting facilities.*

Members of IRAAL automatically receive TEANGA published yearly, TEANGLITIR published twice a year and AILA publications. For information regarding membership contact: The Secretary, IRAAL, c/o ITÉ, 31 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2.

The Editor,
March, 1994.

Ní gá gurb ionann na tuairimí atá nochta in aon alt agus tuairimí IRAAL nó An Bhoird Eagarthóireachta.

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Ba mhaith le hIRAAL buíochas a ghabháil leo seo a leanas a rinne moltóireacht ar ailt a cuireadh chuig TEANGA lena bhfoilsiú.

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University College, Dublin

Nuclear Prominence in Hiberno English: A Preliminary Investigation

Rosemary O'Halpin
St. Joseph's School for Deaf Boys

INTRODUCTION

This investigation is concerned with the traditional structure of the tone-group and its relevance to Hiberno English. It explores the notion of greatest prominence which is widely attributed to the nuclear syllable. Auditory and acoustic analysis of the perceptual (pitch, timing and loudness) and the physical (fundamental frequency (FO), duration and intensity) correlates of stress were carried out on a small corpus of data in order to establish:

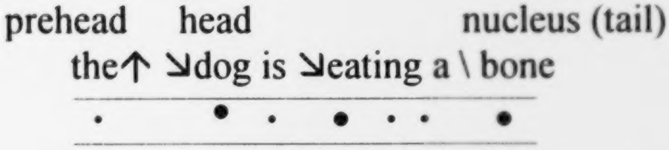
a) which syllable in each utterance was perceived as the most prominent by a panel of trained and untrained listeners;

b) whether this prominence was due to any or to a combination of these correlates.

THE INTONATION SYSTEM

The terms breath-group or sense-group have been used by different authors to describe what Crystal (1969), O'Connor and Arnold (1973) and Cruttenden (1986) refer to as a 'tone-unit', 'tone-group' and 'intonation-group' respectively. The term 'tone-group' as defined by O'Connor and Arnold (1973) will be used from now on, because their description of English nuclear tones analysed by the authors listed above as well as others such as Couper-Kuhlen (1986), forms the basis for this discussion. There seems to be general agreement about the structure of the tone-group which, according to Crystal (1969), 'minimally consists of a syllable and must carry a glide'. This syllable is called the ***nucleus*** and its presence accounts for our internal sense of 'completeness' or tone-boundary. The common theme running through many definitions of the nucleus is that there is an obtrusion, glide or pitch movement to or from the last pitch accented syllable which makes it more prominent than other syllables (Cruttenden 1986, Couper-Kuhlen 1986). This syllable can also be loud and long (Couper-Kuhlen 1986, p.79). Although O'Connor and Arnold (1973) state that the whole tune of utterance centres on this syllable and that it is made to stand out by a combination of stress and pitch features (p.15), it is not described by them as the 'most' prominent accented syllable in an utterance.

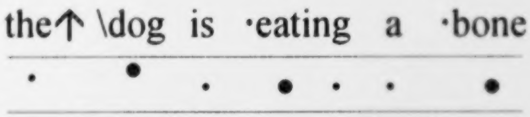
There may also be other elements in the tone-group such as ***a pre-head, a head*** and ***a tail*** some of which are identified in the sentence analysed in the present discussion.



The nucleus falls on the last accented syllable ***bone*** and the tail, when it occurs, generally consists of any stressed or unstressed syllables following the nucleus. These syllables are not independently pitch prominent (accented) and usually follow the direction of the nuclear tone. The head begins on the first stressed/accented syllable ***dog*** and ends on the syllable just before the nucleus. The pre-head usually refers to the syllables just before the first stressed syllable and they are normally unstressed.

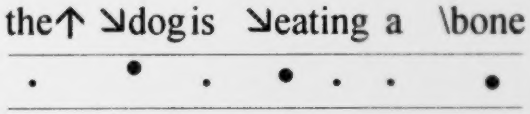
Difficulties arise when there is a shift in focus to an earlier syllable for emphasis or contrast and so the nucleus is no longer on the last accented syllable. The alternatives are as follows:

(i) The nucleus is no longer on the last accented syllable and in theory this syllable should be absorbed into the tail. The concept of the tail as a number of rhythmically stressed but unaccented syllables would rarely apply here if the last accented syllable were no longer the nucleus.

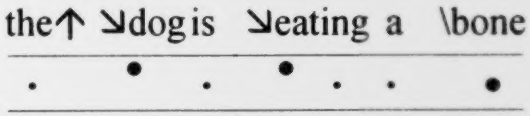


(ii) The nucleus on the last accented syllable might be more 'fixed' and less 'movable' in dialects such as Edinburgh Scottish English and Caribbean English (Cruttenden 1986, p.143) as a result of different stress patterns and fewer syllable reductions:

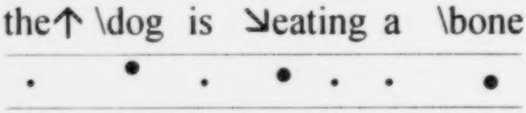
a) extra prominence occurs on ***dog*** as a result of increased pitch obtrusion.



b) extra prominence occurs on ***dog*** as a result of a glide or movement in pitch but not obtrusion.



(iii) The nucleus, while remaining on the last accented syllable, is 'downgraded' or 'suppressed' by a shift of focus onto another accented syllable by a pitch glide or movement but not necessarily an obtrusion on that syllable. Some authors suggest the possibility of ***superordinate*** and ***subordinate*** (or ***secondary***) nuclei.



Various explanations are offered in discussions of nuclear subordination for grammatical purposes such as focus, contrast or emphasis. Crystal (1969, p.263-265) describes how the main tone might be brought forward in the sentence leaving a 'secondary' nucleus, as in (iii) above, while Cruttenden (1986, p.50) suggests that the last accented syllable may be 'downgraded' because a 'penultimate' one is perceptually more prominent. Similarly, Couper-Kuhlen (1986) distinguishes between a superordinate and subordinate nucleus in the same tone-group (p.105-6).

In contrast with all of this Cruttenden (1986, p.51) suggests treating the tone-group as a series of pitch accents of which one is more prominent. Other accents are perhaps suppressed or downgraded. In the example above, ***dog*** is the most prominent syllable and other accented syllables such as ***eat*** and ***bone*** are possibly downgraded or suppressed. There seems to be general agreement in the literature that focus on a syllable for emphasis or contrast is usually signalled by a different pitch configuration (i.e. a steeper fall) than other accented syllables. However, unmarked neutral utterances are more complex than marked utterances where the absence of pitch obtrusion may lead to difficulties in deciding which syllable is the most prominent. Ladd (1980), who is concerned with the metrical organisation of an utterance, suggests that a native speaker imposes a rhythmical structure on an utterance in which 'a given syllable is prominent' (p.39) and he is critical of experimenters who look for cues on a syllable by syllable basis (p.41). The present study, which investigates the relevance of the traditional structure of the tone-group to Hiberno English, is concerned with the rhythmical organisation of the data.

DATA

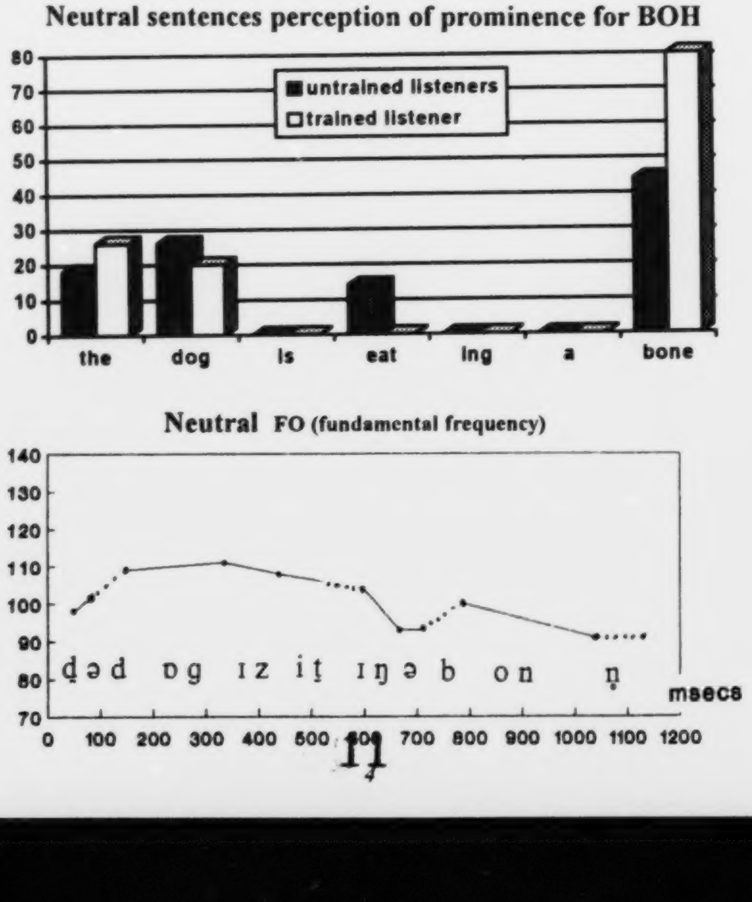
Neutral (unmarked) versions of ***the dog is eating a bone*** were elicited from two south Dublin informants (male and middle class) who were asked to describe what was happening in a picture. Questions were designed to elicit emphasis or contrast on ***dog***, ***eating*** and ***bone*** in complete sentences. E1, E2 and E3 (E= Element) refer to these words respectively and an asterisk indicates which one is contrastive or emphasised. Five repetitions of each sentence type i.e. neutral, E1*, E2* and E3* were recorded for each subject using a Sony Digital Audio Tape Recorder (DTC 300ES). The present discussion, however, is confined to neutral, E1* and E3* sentences.

RESULTS

Auditory judgements

Auditory judgements of the data are based on the impressions of one phonetically trained listener and a panel of 6 untrained listeners unfamiliar with the data. Five repetitions of neutral, marked E1* and E3* versions of ***the dog is eating a bone*** were recorded randomly in isolation from the questions. A Tandberg Audio Tutor 771 Cassette recorder was used and listeners were given a handout and instructed to circle the syllable which they considered to be the most emphasised or prominent. Although perceptual experiments have shown that pitch changes play an important role in the perception of stress, timing and loudness should not be ignored. (Fry, 1955; 1958; Lehiste, 1970; Faure, Hirst and Chafcouloff, 1980; Ladd, 1980). In the present study, the trained listener, more attuned to the data, made decisions on whether a syllable was prominent or contrastive as a result of changes in pitch, length or loudness. The trained listener frequently perceived the greatest prominence in unmarked utterances on the last accented syllable ***bone*** but not always as a result of pitch obtrusion. Increased length and loudness in some instances contributed to the perception of prominence.

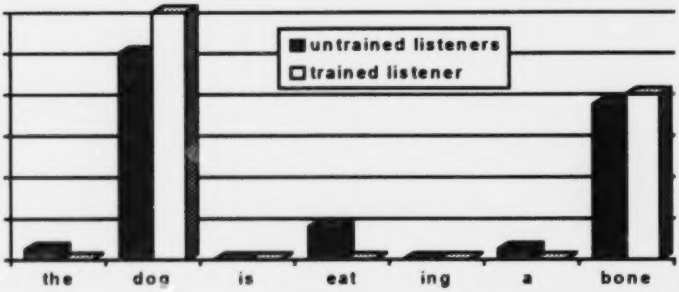
Figure 1. Perception of greatest prominence in neutral versions of ***the dog is eating a bone*** for BOH. For FO graph summarizes 5 repetitions in real time.


Neutral sentences perception of prominence for BOH

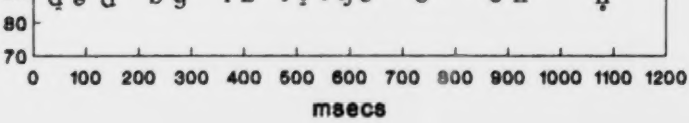
Neutral FO (fundamental frequency)

Figure 2. Perception of greatest prominence in neutral versions of ***the dog is eating a bone*** for CB. The FO graph summarizes 5 repetitions in real time.

Neutral sentences perception of greatest prominence for CB

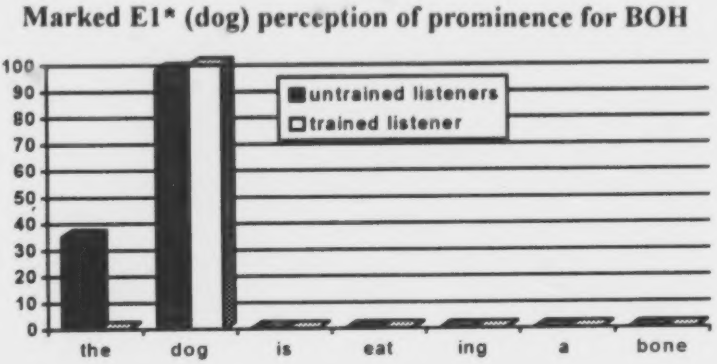


Neutral FO (fundamental frequency)



There were differences between the two speakers as indicated in Figures 1 and 2. The last accented syllable ***bone*** was frequently perceived as the most prominent syllable in neutral utterances for BOH in Figure 1 whereas Figure 2 shows that the first accented syllable ***dog*** was generally perceived as the most prominent syllable for CB. The trained listener's judgements matched the untrained listeners' impressions but there were also some instances where the greatest prominence was perceived by the latter on other stressed or unstressed syllables.

Figure 3. Perception of greatest prominence in ***E1****** sentences (focus on ***dog***) BOH. The average FO contour is in real time.



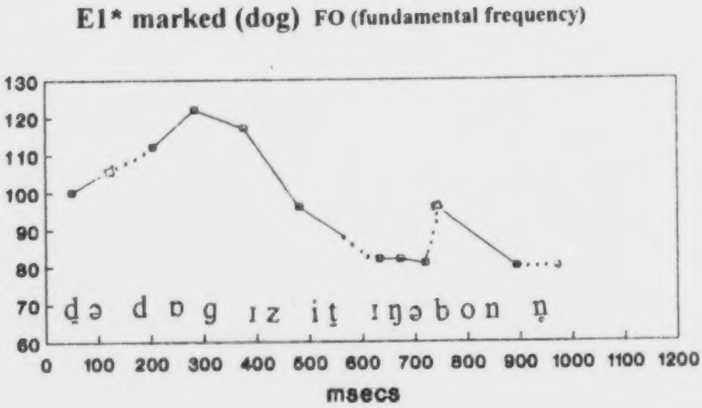


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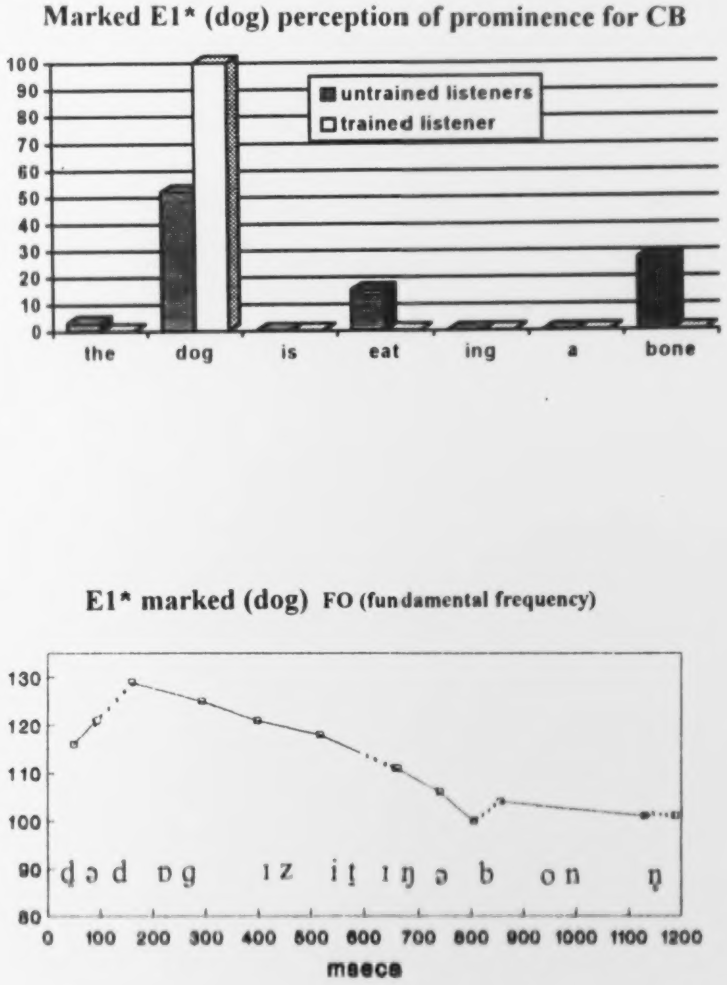
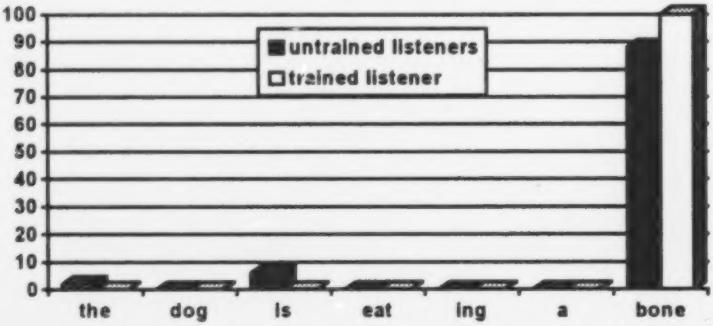
Figure 4. Perception of greatest prominence in ***E1**** sentences (focus on ***dog***) for CB. The average FO contour is in real time.



When focus shifted to *dog* in E1* type sentences in Figures 3 and 4, the trained listener perceived the greatest prominence on this syllable (100%) for both CB and BOH. There were differences among the untrained listeners who sometimes perceived inappropriate prominence on other stressed and unstressed syllables. Despite this, the highest % scores occurred on *dog* for BOH (97%) and CB (53%).

Figure 5. Perception of greatest prominence in *E3** sentences (focus on ***bone***) for BOH. The average FO contour is in real time.

Marked E3* (bone) perception of prominence for BOH



E3* marked (bone) FO (fundamental frequency)

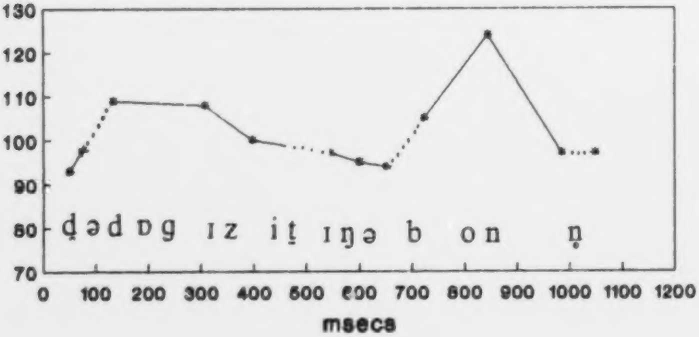
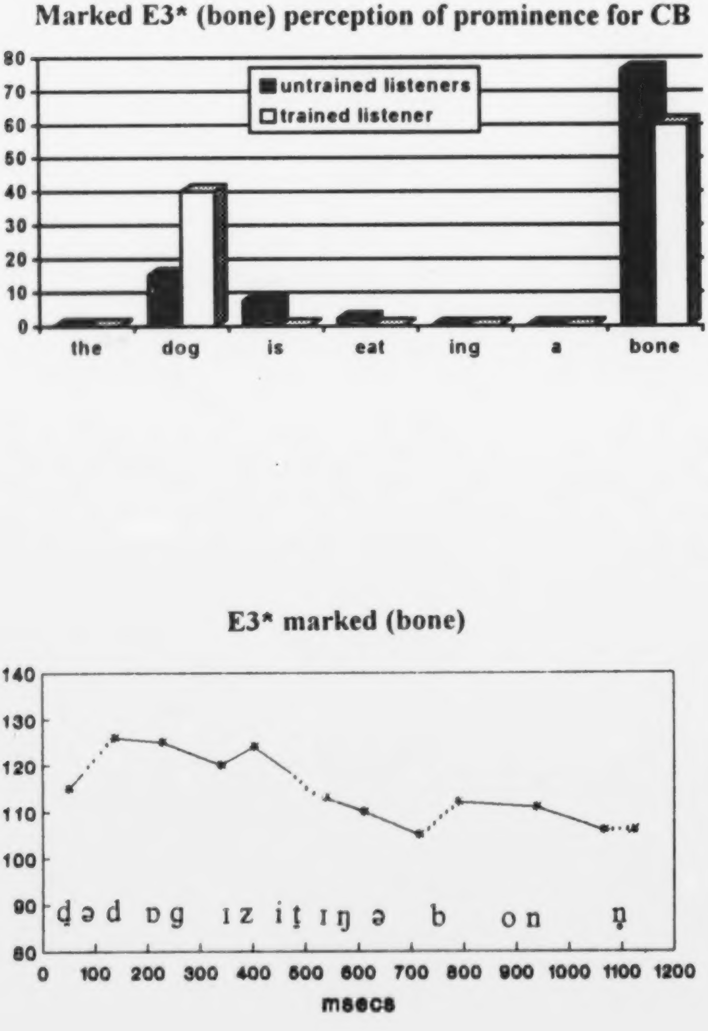


Figure 6. Perception of greatest prominence in *E3** sentences (focus on ***bone***) for CB. The average FO contour is in real time.



In E3* sentences when emphasis or special focus occurred on ***bone***, Figure 3 indicates that appropriate prominence was generally perceived on this syllable by the trained listener (100% and 60% for BOH and CB respectively) and by the untrained listeners (87% and 76% for BOH and CB).

The combined listening tests indicate that in neutral utterances, the nucleus, (assumed to be the last accented syllable) may not always be perceived as the most prominent syllable. When ***dog*** and ***bone*** were brought into focus for emphasis or contrast in E1* and E3* respectively, they were generally perceived by trained and untrained listeners as the most pitch prominent except for E3* sentences for CB. Although appropriate pitch prominence was perceived by the trained listener in E1* sentences for this speaker, they were not considered contrastive.

Acoustic analysis

Experiments carried out by Fry (1955; 1958) established the interdependence of the physical correlates of stress (i.e. fundamental frequency (FO), duration and intensity). In general, experiments show that FO seems to be an important correlate (Lehiste 1970, p.126) but when duration and intensity were analysed separately, duration seemed to play a more important role.

Fundamental Frequency (FO)

FO measurements were obtained from a Computerised Speech Laboratory (Kay Elemetrics, model 4300). In general, one FO point was measured in unstressed syllables and points were taken at the beginning or end of a fall or rise in accented syllables. Extra points were measured at the peak or in the valley of a rise-fall or a fall-rise. The FO patterns, when consistent across repetitions, were presented in stylised summary graphs to eliminate redundant perturbations (Cooper and Sorensen, 1981, p.25)

Average graphs of ***neutral*** versions of ***the dog is eating a bone*** for BOH and CB are presented in Figures 1 and 2 for BOH and CB respectively. The results of the listening tests in the same figures show that the perception of the greatest prominence did not always coincide with the highest FO peaks in the graphs. However, Figures 3 and 4, summarising E1* utterances (***focus on dog***), show that the perception of the greatest prominence on ***dog*** was accompanied by boosted FO peaks on that syllable for both BOH and CB. Although listeners generally perceived the greatest prominence on ***bone*** in E3* utterances, Figures 5 and 6 indicate that only BOH had an obtruding FO peak on this syllable. The perception of appropriate prominence for CB may be due to a process of deaccenting of an earlier syllable (i.e. ***dog***) and slight boosting of the syllable in focus (i.e. ***bone***).

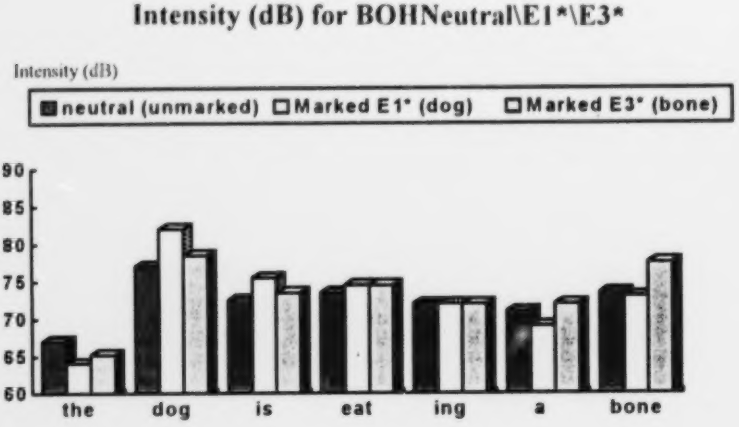
Duration and intensity

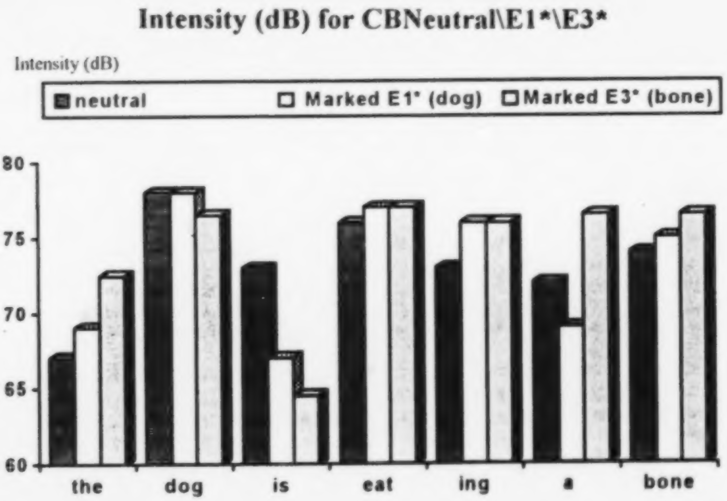
Table 1.

Average duration measurements in msecs for unmarked (neutral), E1* and E3* sentences for BOH and CB expressed as a percentage of average total sentence duration. Durations for syllables which should be brought into focus for contrastive purposes are in bold.

	the	dog	is	eat	ing	a	bone	Total S.
BOH								
unm	5.0	25.22	10.28	15.82	6.82	4.25	32.54	1011
E1*	5.69	**26.14**	10.52	21.22	7.26	4.46	24.69	895
E3*	4.11	22.47	9.45	15.65	5.67	5.46	**34.87**	952
CB								
unm	4.68	24.22	9.67	13.36	7.08	6.48	34.49	1003
E1*	5.37	**27.90**	10.64	12.79	7.07	7.24	28.99	1118
E3*	7.19	25.35	6.29	13.47	7.29	5.39	**35.03**	1002

Figure 7. Histograms showing average peak intensity (dB) for BOH and CB in neutral, E1* and E3* type sentences.





Relative syllable durations in msecs (expressed above as % of total sentence duration) were obtained from wideband spectrograms using the CSL (Computerised Speech Laboratory). Peak intensity (dB) was also measured for each syllable.

Table 1 above shows that in neutral sentences for BOH and CB, ***bone*** has the longest average duration. This might contribute to listeners' perception of prominence on this syllable as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Intensity measurements summarised in Figure 7 show that peak intensity for both speakers occurred on ***dog*** where the greatest prominence was also frequently perceived for CB. Appropriate lengthening of ***dog*** and ***bone***, when these syllables were in focus in E1* and E3* respectively, can be seen in Table 1 for both speakers. This is accompanied by boosted intensity peaks on these syllables as indicated in Figure 7.

Clearly, syllables are brought into focus by increasing duration and intensity. This, combined with an obtrusion of FO or a process of deaccenting and boosting of accented syllables, contributes to the perception of prominence, emphasis or contrast. However, neutral utterances are less straightforward and the perception of the most prominent syllable can not always be accounted for by a boosted FO or intensity peak or by increased duration. This highlights the importance of a rhythmic approach which examines syllables in relation to each other rather than in isolation.

CONCLUSION

The results of the listening test shows that the greatest prominence in neutral sentences for both speakers in this investigation was not always perceived on the last accented syllable. The greatest prominence, wherever it occurred, was not always due to a pitch obtrusion or increase in length and loudness. Similarly, acoustic measurements show that the greatest prominence did not always coincide with obtruding FO and intensity peaks, or increased duration. When focus shifted from the last accented syllable, the notion of the nucleus followed by a tail consisting of stressed but unaccented syllables was called into question. This is illustrated in the summary graph of E1* utterances for BOH in Figure 3 which shows that total deaccenting of syllables following the so called nucleus on ***dog*** did not occur. Acoustic measurements show that, in general, focus on ***dog*** and ***bone*** in E1* and E3* was signalled by boosted FO and intensity peaks as well as increased duration. However, for CB, they were not perceived as contrastive by the trained listener.

Theoretical and pedagogical implications

As already outlined above there are inherent theoretical inconsistencies within accepted definitions of the nucleus as demonstrated above for Hiberno English. Difficulties also arise in other dialects of spoken English such as Scottish Edinburgh English and Carribean English (Cruttenden 1986, p.143) because of less de-accenting of old information and fewer syllable reductions. However, the present discussion is based on a preliminary investigation confined to simple SVO sentences. Future analysis should include speakers from different geographical areas as well as a variety of sentence types expressing grammatical or attitudinal information. In this way the relevance of existing theories of stress and accent to Hiberno English could be explored more fully. A proper description of the intonation system of Hiberno English would undoubtedly lead to the production of more appropriate materials for teaching English as a foreign language. Pronunciation practice books designed to help learners acquire intonation patterns used by speakers of Southern British English are of limited value.

This project follows a study of profoundly deaf children (O'Halpin, 1993). The difficulties associated with the nucleus also apply here because of inherent rhythmic problems such as monotonous or erratic pitch, excessive lengthening of syllables, and the failure to distinguish between stressed and unstressed syllables. The relationship between perception and production of speech is complex (Rubin-Spitz and McGarr 1990) and may vary for different speakers. To ensure effective speech training, therapists and teachers need to be familiar with the intonation patterns in Hiberno English.

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The Translatability of Nil Equivalence Terms

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses a number of nil equivalence terms and the problems encountered when a rendering is attempted into Spanish. By way of introduction, the aim of the paper is stated and the linguistic corpus is presented. The section titled *Methodology*, provides an overview of the criteria followed during the research. This is followed by a theoretical section, titled *Translatability* or *Untranslatability?*, where the theoretical framework for the study is set. Different points that arise when analysing nil equivalence terms are treated in subsequent sections. Unreliability of dictionaries presents the main problems encountered, both with monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Importance of Graphic or Photographic Support provides an insight into this complementary procedure when it comes to render a nil equivalence term. Importance of Componential Analysis gives an overview of this method as a useful tool when analysing cultural terminology as shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3. By way of a conclusion, some considerations are given at the end of the paper.

AIM AND LINGUISTIC CORPUS

The aim of this paper is to analyse a number of nil equivalence terms and the translation problems that these pose when they are to be transferred into Spanish. The choice of topic was determined both by its intrinsic importance and also by the need to develop a relatively little researched area. To that end, i.e., to examine the aforementioned terminological items, it was essential to locate a literature which would reflect most clearly a country's features and idiosyncracies. That was the reason why tourist information brochures were chosen as a starting point for this research.

Tourist material is particularly interesting because of its importance in the area of international marketing. Both the profusion of nil equivalence terms in this type of literature and the fact that on most occasions tourist information brochures are very poorly translated influenced the decision to choose this type of text as a source for the linguistic corpus.

The data analysed for this study has been published by two sources: Bord Fáilte Éireann (The Irish Tourist Board) and The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). The data is composed of assorted leaflets which were available free of charge from the main branches of both Bord Fáilte Éireann (The Irish Tourist Board), and The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), varying according to the different regions within Ireland: Leinster, Munster, Connacht and Ulster.

METHODOLOGY

The data analysis has been based on several criteria. The first step was to look up the terminological items in the *Collins Monolingual English Dictionary.* The second step was to verify whether those terms appeared or not in the *Collins Bilingual Spanish-English/English-Spanish Dictionary.* In cases where a term did not appear in any of these dictionaries, the last source of reference was the *Oxford English Dictionary.*

In order to have a better understanding of the different terms analysed, interviews with specialists in the subject fields were arranged. In those interviews, questions were asked in relation to the items presented: exactly what the item was, with all its peculiarities; where it could be found, what its origin was and what the connotations were.

TRANSLATABILITY OR UNTRANSLATABILITY?

At first sight, translation might simply appear to be the rendition of a source language text (SLT) into a target language text (TLT). However, the process is much more intricate than it may seem and it was this underestimation of the difficulties involved that led Richards (1953:250) to use the following hyperbole and refer to it as 'probably the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos'.

One explanation for this complex type of event can be based on Vermeer's (1987:25) statement when he claims that 'there are too many gaps in our knowledge about the functioning of cultures and languages'. He claims that translation is more of an intuitive process than an empirical one, since there are no scientific rules to assess the correctness of a given translation. In other words, there are no precise facts which can be used to assess whether a translation is perfect or not. This situation led him to assert that 'there is no science of translating, but a science of translation' (Vermeer 1987:25).

Sociolinguistics also plays an important part in translation (House 1981:103-109). This is because the different aspects and behaviours related to each of the cultures involved in the process have to be analysed. The cultural factor hampers the whole process:

> 'Cada pueblo calla unas cosas para poder decir otras. Porque todo sería indecible. De aquí la enorme dificultad de la traducción: en ella se trata de decir en un idioma precisamente lo que este idioma tiende a silenciar' (Ortega y Gasset 1977:46).

These pragmatic features inherent to any text that Ortega makes reference to, are difficult to retain in any metatext and for this reason cultural aspects should on no account be underestimated when a proper transfer is to be attempted.

The first point to consider when attempting a translation of a given text or linguistic corpus is whether to produce a communicative or semantic translation. In the case of producing an overt translation, as is the case in this research, the aim would be

> 'to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.' (Newmark 1988:47).

The approach adopted for this research is related to Vermeer's *Skopostheorie*, closely connected with a 'reader-centred translating' (Hatim and Mason 1990:16). In the first place, translation is seen as a cultural process rather than a merely linguistic one. Consequently, translation is seen as an *act of communication* and not simply as an act of transcoding an SLT into a TLT. Furthermore, the orientation lies on the function of the TLT and not on that of the SLT. Vermeer's *Skopostheorie* considers translation then as a crosscultural transfer.

> 'Translation is not the transcoding of words or sentences from one language to another, but a complex form of action, whereby someone provides information on a text (source language material) in a new situation and under changed functional, cultural and linguistic conditions, preserving formal aspects as closely as possible.' (Snell-Hornby in Bassnett and Lefèvre 1990:82).

The main feature in his theory is the function of the TLT. Vermeer talks about *Funktionskonstanz* or unchanged function and about *Funktionsveränderung* or changed function, whereby the text is adapted to meet specified needs in the target culture (Snell-Hornby in Bassnett and Lefèvre 1990:82), therefore adopting the approach of dynamic equivalence. The idea of adopting covert translation was rejected, since the approach would base its attention on the SLT, and would compromise on meaning. The approach of focusing on an overt translation in this research is closely related to what Candell and Hulin state in their research:

> 'Equivalent item translations are different linguistic versions of the same items that evoke the specified response with the same probability among individuals with equal amounts of the trait. Two individuals who speak different languages but who have the same amount of the underlying trait should respond correctly or positively with equal probability to an item and its equivalent translation. Items with unequal response functions across languages provide non-equivalent measurement.' (Candell and Hulin 1987:420).

Two extremely different points of view have constituted one of the main arguments in translation studies for centuries. Both of these points of view have arisen in response to the following question: is translation possible, or is it an impossible exercise?

This paper is concerned with the question of whether terms with a difficulty in cultural appreciation can be transferred or whether untranslatability is an inherent feature of these terminological items. Whereas these terms present the problem of theoretical untranslatability, on the practical side, a rendering can always be provided.

In this research the problem of translatability and untranslatability has been encountered in many cases. On the one hand, there is the necessity to provide a translation for this sort of text and on the other hand there is a 'theoretical impossibility' of translating some terms. As an illustration of this ongoing debate, the following two quotations provide ample evidence:

> 'Translation is of course an impossible task. No version of any sentence in one language can possibly capture the semantic richness, phonic structure, syntactic form and connotative allusiveness of a sentence in another language.' (Petrey in Rose 1984:87).

> 'Muy bien. Es imposible traducir. Pero la imposibilidad a la que suele aludirse asi es la imposibilidad de la Traducción. Es decir, es aquella imposibilidad que aconsejaría no construir más casas, pues, en definitiva, todas terminan teniendo goteras y cayéndose; porque no puede construirse la Casa.' (López García 1991:9).

It is clear that the rendering of nil equivalence terms proves to be intricate since these terminological items lack referents in the TL equivalent to those of the SL. This limitation in TL lexis deserves special consideration:

> '...the second type of constraint is nearly always culturally meaningful, i.e. it represents an historical stage in the consciousness of the respective communicative community. It is mostly bound up with the 'lexicalization of reality' or rather the way speakers of a language have come to single out certain conceptualizations as worthy of deserving a particular 'name' which they store in their social memory beyond an ephemeral communicative situation.' (Neubert in MacMathúna and Singleton 1983:24).

This 'lexicalization of reality' that Neubert refers to is the biggest hindrance when attempting to render any SL nil equivalence item into any TL. For instance, analysing the term 'bannock' (see Table 1), it can be argued that the conceptualisation of the term involved exists in Spanish, since a 'type of bread' is being dealt with. The specific features of that particular 'bread' would certainly vary from culture to culture but the cognitive concept of 'bread' remains the same in intercultural communication.

On the other hand, it would be the **realia** or 'language-specific lexemes which reflect life and manners of the communicative community' (Neubert in Mac Mathúna and Singleton 1983:24) that the TL lacks. In the case of the term 'bannock' mentioned above, it would be the distinctive semes that differ in the SL and the TL cultures and that create the impossibility of a perfect lexicalization in the TL. However, terms that pose this problem can be examined and the use of componential analysis (C.A.) proves of great help when trying to get as close as possible to the SL item as will be shown below.

UNRELIABILITY OF DICTIONARIES

During the data analysis carried out for this research, both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries were used. However, as indicated in 'Problems of Intercultural Translation' (Lomholt 1991:28-35), the unreliability of dictionaries is a major problem when dealing with the translation of culture-specific terms.

As the different examples in the data analysis have revealed, dictionaries pose many more problems than are apparent. In order to consider these problems in a systematic way, two main categories can be established:

- *Monolingual dictionaries*
- *Bilingual dictionaries*

Monolingual Dictionaries

For the translator, monolingual dictionaries can be a useful aid in the search for information about culture-specific terms. However, the highly specific nature of cultural terminology and the need for lexicographers to provide concise information means that monolingual dictionaries are inevitably marred by a number of inadequacies and generalisations.

The problem of ***incomplete definitions*** occurs because lexicographers are obliged to omit certain distinctive semes of a given lexeme, even though these are of great importance for the translator of nil equivalence terms. A representative example of this incompleteness can be found in the research concerning the term *bannock*, previously mentioned. In this case, information about usage in Scotland and North of England can be found, but no information on Irish usage is provided (Simpson and Weiner 1989, Vol.I:937). Obviously, if certain semes do not appear in the dictionary and the translator does not base his/her information on that provided by the experts in the subject field and SL interviewees, the rendering is very likely to be poor or incomplete.

A second problem that has emerged from this research is that there are often ***differences between the definitions provided by monolingual dictionaries and the definitions appearing in the contexts*** where the terminological item appears. It is logical to think that the definition provided in the context should be more accurate than the one appearing in the dictionary. Such a belief is based on the assumption that the writer of the tourist information brochures where the item is included must necessarily be a native speaker of the SL culture, and also, if not an expert in the subject field, at least a person with good knowledge of his/her own culture.

A representative example of this aspect can be found in the term 'champ'. Although the basic ingredients for this dish are mentioned both in the dictionary (Hanks 1988:263) and in the contextual example where the terminological item appears, there is no direct match between the two. The reason for this difference could probably be attributed to the variety of local or regional customs and usages.

A third and final problem encountered is that of ***definitions in monolingual dictionaries which differ from the views expressed by experts in the subject field***.

A representative example is the term 'Irish stew'. Different experts in the subject field strongly emphasised the fact that 'Irish stew' should never be made of beef as the dictionary states (Hanks 1988:804).

Bilingual Dictionaries

The problem of ***unavailable*** or ***non-existent*** terms is probably the one that the translator of culture-specific terms has to face most often when using a bilingual dictionary. As previously mentioned, the specificity of these items means that their inclusion in a bilingual dictionary is at best unlikely and at worst impossible. For instance, terms such as *bannock* or *barmbrack* (see Table 2) simply do not appear in the Collins Spanish-English/English-Spanish dictionary.

Another problem encountered in bilingual dictionaries is that of ***incorrect renderings***. In order to solve this problem effectively, a good knowledge of the SL culture is an essential prerequisite for the translator, since a lack of appropriate understanding might lead the translator to accept the given entry. For example, the first rendering provided for the term *farm-house* is *cortijo* (Smith 1990:204). However, this TL term fails to convey the cultural aspects associated with the term 'farm-house' as it is used and understood in Ireland, from the very fact that a 'farm house' is a type of establishment which offers accommodation.

Having identified the major problems related to the use of both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, it is important to state that one potential solution does exist. In short, the solution would be to ***develop glossaries or databases*** where cultural terms are arranged either in alphabetical order or under topic headings. This is clearly an enormous task which would require not only the effort of qualified translators specialising in specific areas, but also the help and support of Tourist Information Offices located in the countries involved.

As mentioned before, it is of the utmost importance to consult experts in the subject field and SL native speakers when trying to translate nil equivalence terms. As shown above, should these aspects be forgotten, the renderings that any translator could offer would certainly be affected either by incorrectness or incompleteness.

IMPORTANCE OF GRAPHIC OR PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPORT

The use of graphic or photographic support is of vital importance when translating nil equivalence terms in tourist information material.

Publishers of tourist information brochures, being aware of the whole range of possibilities that this medium offers, do not hesitate to use this method. Two different approaches or views should be considered in this context.

First of all, and this is very relevant ***from the point of view of tourism***, the use of photographic support is a way of presenting aspects of a country in the best possible light. In this instance, the publishers 'offer' the country to the reader. They not only include photographs of 'breathtaking views' but also present the most representative activities and objects from that particular country: sports, cuisine, traditions, crafts, musical instruments and so on. In this case, the function of the visual support would be primarily a marketing strategy.

Secondly, ***from a linguistic point of view***, although somewhat indirectly, the use of graphic or photographic support is an instrument which makes the understanding of cultural terminology easier for both the SL and TL readership. This fact can be explained quite simply: there will always be readers, whether they are native speakers of the SL or not, who are unfamiliar with regional or dialect terms.

This second approach is the most interesting one from the point of view of this study. As previously mentioned, the publishers opted for this method as a way of presenting the products to the readership. Although it is very unlikely that the publishers thought of the linguistic process in order to improve communication and understanding, they indirectly provided the translator with an effective strategy. This visual support helps the translator a great deal when dealing with cultural terminology. Thanks to this support, on most occasions the translator does not need to include any supplementary information, since a *transference* in addition to the visual support would be sufficient for the understanding of the terminological item. Photographic support thus proves to be a very valid complementary procedure to use in these cases and in this kind of literature. The translator does not need to use either a functional or a descriptive equivalent or a translation couplet. If the photographic support is clear enough for a total understanding of the term, the translator should simply leave the term in inverted commas in its original SL form. However, should the translator consider that the visual support is insufficient for the appreciation of what the term designates and implies, a translation procedure should be used to reinforce unsatisfactory visual assistance.

One final aspect can be considered at this stage and it is whether or not the translator should be entitled to add photographic or diagrammatic support to the translated brochure. This question has no easy answer. Should the inclusion of extra visual material force the publisher to incur additional costs, then most probably the answer is no. However, if the translator considers it appropriate to include extra visual support in order to facilitate a better understanding of one item, and knows that this will not prompt a substantial increase in publishing costs, then he/she should definitely be permitted to do so.

The use of appropriate graphic or photographic support is extremely useful when dealing with the translation of cultural terminology in tourist information material. It is to be especially recommended in those cases with nil equivalence.

IMPORTANCE OF COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

Componential Analysis (C.A.) has proved to be an extremely useful tool when dealing with the translation of culture-specific terms, especially in those cases of terminological items with nil equivalence. Whenever a translator is faced with the problem of nil equivalence, he/she must inevitably find a way of overcoming this difficulty and provide a TL rendering. Even though some of the connotations of the SL term might be lost in the transfer, the closest counterpart must be found.

Following Pottier's model (Pottier 1964) and by analysing the closest lexemes in the TL, and by assigning a positive (+) or a negative (-) value to the distinctive features or semes, it was shown that the translator can provide a rendering in the TL. The examples of *bannock, barmbrack* or *treacle farl* (see Tables 1, 2 and 3) corroborate that, although some aspects of the SL item are lost, it is possible to provide an acceptable rendering. However, C.A. is limited in cases where the cultural terminological items present a problem of socio-cultural connotation. The referent for a *bannock* would certainly be non-existent in many TL cultures. Hence, the translator, using componential analysis, has to perceive what the object is in detail, so it can be conveyed faithfully to the TL readership.

In order to carry out a correct C.A., the translator must study carefully the distinctive semes that the lexeme to be analysed possesses. It might seem obvious to think that the best source of information for obtaining such features would be a good dictionary. However, in the translation of nil equivalence terms this is not always the case. In fact, the most appropriate way to initiate such an analysis is to consult experts in the subject field. Once this first step has been taken, native SL speakers must also be consulted. Finally, the third step to be taken is to consider information provided by both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries.

The process outlined above is the one that was adopted for this study. During a series of interviews carried out with both experts in the subject field and native SL speakers, this author received information that would otherwise have been impossible to find in any dictionary, be it monolingual or bilingual. Once all this necessary information had been gathered, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries were consulted and the distinctive semes were then established in order to carry out a C.A.

Having clearly identified the distinctive semes, the C.A. itself can be divided into a number of further steps which ultimately enable the translator to identify the most suitable TL lexeme to be offered in the translation. Firstly, the translator must choose the closest possible lexemes in the TL so they can be analysed in the C.A. Secondly, the translator must assign a positive value (+) to those semes of the TL lexeme that correspond to the distinctive features of the SL lexeme. At the same time, the translator must also assign a negative value (-) to those semes which do not correspond to the distinctive features of the SL lexeme.

One important point that requires further clarification is that the positive value (+) is assigned on the basis of possibility rather than certainty. For instance, a *bannock* is usually made from oatmeal and barley whereas Spanish bread, or *pan*, is not and the latter term can therefore be assigned a positive value (+) on the basis of possibility. The only task then remaining for the translator is to identify the TL lexeme which has at least the same primary distinctive features as the SL lexeme.

After carrying out a componential analysis and studying the distinctive semes that a lexeme possesses, the translator is then in a position to apply the translation procedure that best suits the particular context given. This research has shown that the most effective solutions in cases of nil equivalence terms could be the use of either a functional equivalent, a descriptive equivalent or a translation couplet. Of course, some loss of information is always inevitable in such cases, because by using any of these procedures the reader would not perceive the special patterns, i.e. the distinctive semes, of the lexeme. This inevitable loss of specific features of the original SL terminological item in the process of translation would result in what has been defined as 'restricted or conditioned translatability' (Neubert in MacMathúna and Singleton 1983:23).

An analysis on the included C.A. tables shows that underneath the SL term, different possible equivalent terms in Spanish are analysed. These were chosen after considering the closest semantic fields in Spanish for the SL items. In the columns, the different distinctive semes of the SL term appear. These semes were arranged in terms of importance, from the more generic appearing on the left to the more specific appearing on the right.

In the case of the term ***bannock*** it can be observed that from all the closest possible items in Spanish it is the term ***pan*** the one that covers all the distinctive semes of the SL item. The analysed terms ***roscón, bizcocho*** or ***torta*** share some of the distinctive semes of *bannock*, but the fact that they do not share the first and most generic one, the fact that a *bannock* is a type of *bread* excludes them from a correct rendering. It should also be mentioned that the seme ***bread*** and its consequent rendering into *pan* would result into a highly unspecific transfer, since ***pan*** is the most generic feature of the lexeme. Therefore, a more specific characteristic of *bannock* should be included in the translation. The semes ***round*** and ***flat*** could be excluded since these features are common to the generic concept of ***bread***. However, the inclusion of the feature *made of oatmeal* or ***made of barley*** would greatly narrow the semantic perception of the item in question. A potential rendition for *bannock* using a *translation couplet* could therefore be ***pan de avena*** *(bannock).*

In the case of the term ***barmbrack*** a similar phenomenon occurs. Items closely associated in terms of meaning in Spanish were chosen but the most generic and decisive seme is only represented by the Spanish term *bollo*. A ***bollo*** in Spain is not necessarily always filled with fruit, whereas a *barmbrack* is. Therefore the inclusion of this distinctive seme would result in a more complete understanding of the SL terminological item. A potential solution for *barmbrack* using a ***translation*** *couplet* could therefore be *bollos rellenos de fruta (barmbracks).*

In the case of ***treacle farl*** the componential analysis is applied similarly. Being a *treacle farl* a type of bread, the lexeme *pan* in Spanish would be the one that most faithfully corresponds to the SL item. However, the rendering should be complemented with one of the distinctive semes, a potential solution being ***pan de*** *melaza (treacle farl).*

As shown above, nil equivalence terms should and in fact *can* be translated. However, translation has to be considered in relative terms. One of the biggest problems is that

> 'the question of untranslatability has too often been discussed in terms of absolute rather than relative terms.' (Brislin 1976:63).

In short, what the translator has to achieve is a version which is the closest natural equivalent. As mentioned previously, Vermeer's *Skopostheorie* set the framework for this research. The act of translation goes far beyond a merely linguistic transcoding, it is in fact an act of interlingual communication. Translation must be thoroughly analysed from the point of view of function, both in the original SLT and in the TLT, if a communicative approach and the principle of dynamic equivalence are to be retained. The translator should get as close as possible to the SLT, always being aware of the difficulties involved. This is an idea which has been expressed in unequivocal terms

> 'Solo se ha de intentar acercarse. Cuanto más se aproxime la traducción a la obra primera tanto más se habrá triunfado en el empeño. Pero lector y traductor han de ser conscientes de la absoluta imposibilidad de apreciar en castellano, en toda su anchura, altura y profundidad una composición lírica de Mallarmé, Yeats o Kavafis. Lo más que puede hacer el traductor es ser honesto consigo mismo y aceptar con humildad la distancia que por fuerza ha de mediar entre su obra y la del autor al que representa.' (Santoyo 1989:65).

In summary, and especially so when dealing with nil equivalence terms, it is always essential for the translator to be aware that 'la traducción no es la obra, sino un camino hacia la obra' (Ortega y Gasset 1977:64).

Componential Analysis Tables

	Bread	**Sweetened**	**Round**	**Flat**	**Oatmeal**	**Barley**
Bannock	+	+	+	+	+	+
Pan	+	+	+	+	+	+
Roscon	-	-	+	+	-	-
Bizcocho	-	-	+	+	-	-
Torta	-	-	+	+	-	-

Table 1. Componential Analysis of the term ***bannock***

	Bun	**With Fruit**	**Sweet**	**Round**
Barmbrack	+	+	+	+
Pan	-	-	-	+
Bizcocho	-	-	+	+
Torta	-	+	+	+
Bollo	+	+	+	+

Table 2. Componential Analysis of the term ***barmbrack***

	Bread	**Of Treacle**	**Flour**	**Oatmeal**	**Thin**
Treacle Farl	+	+	+	-	+
Pan	+	+/-	+	+	+
Bollo	-	-	+	-	+
Bizcocho	-	-	+	-	+
Pastel	-	-	+	+/-	+

Table 3. Componential Analysis of the term ***treacle farl***

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Deixis and Translation

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ABSTRACT

Given the essentially pragmatic nature of deictic reference, the area may seem irrelevant to translation. Nonetheless, since the area is central to any discussion of language use, many examples can be found of subtle differences between languages which could justifiably be classified as relating to deictic phenomena, and which require sensitive treatment in translation. After presenting an outline of the nature of deixis and the way in which language structures deictic relationships, the article focuses specifically on some particular deictic comparisons and contrasts which are of relevance to the translator, including instances of 'dislocated' deictic relationships. It is suggested that a deictic perspective on such problems may be enlightening, and it is concluded that the issue of 'context of use' is of major relevance both to a discussion of deixis and to translation. A number of other linguistic questions are also raised by a discussion of this issue.

INTRODUCTION

Those who would dismiss the idea of discussing deixis and translation together would find implicit support for their view in much of the literature on translation. It is difficult, in fact, to find any reference to the notion of deixis in that literature. One interesting exception to this trend is Hatim and Mason's *Discourse and the translator* (1990) in which the authors do make reference to deixis. They dismiss deictic phenomena rather summarily, however, as presenting few, if any, difficulties in translation, on the grounds that differences between features of deixis in various languages tend to be extremely obvious: the difference, for example, between the tripartite demonstrative system of Spanish (*este, ese* and *aquel*) and the binary system of English (*this, that*) is clear to the translator and, hence, may be expected not to present translation difficulties. This is true in so far as it goes, but, whatever about the abstract framework into which deictic particles fit in each language, there are often subtle differences between languages in terms of their usage of those particles. We could point, by way of examples from Spanish, to the frequency with which distal or medial demonstratives translate into English as proximals (*Ese es el problema* > This is the problem), or to the fact that definite articles may translate as demonstratives, or vice versa.

This is the case even with the apparently straightforward system of the demonstratives, and if we bear in mind that deixis, in the fullest sense of the term, includes the temporal and personal dimensions, as well as the spatial, we get some idea of the breadth of potential translation problems which could be examined under this heading. Hatim and Mason themselves describe one such difficulty: that of translating into a language such as English the distinction made in many other languages between a 'formal' mode of address and an 'informal' one (often referred to as 'the T/V distinction'). Typically, this problem will arise most acutely when one is translating a film-script or play, or in other literary works, particularly at points where the characters in the work actually make reference to the distinction itself, often inviting another character to use the more intimate form, or, less frequently perhaps, insisting on the use of the polite form. Hatim and Mason refer to Lyons' discussion of the problem as it arises in the translation of *Anna Karenina* (See Lyons 1980). Another interesting example occurs in the Spanish playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo's *El tragaluz*, where the Father keeps his son, Vicente, at a distance, and indicates his disapproval of him, by the constant use of 'usted'. Vicente's plaintive *¿Por qué no dice 'Márchate' en lugar de 'Márchese'? Soy su hijo.* (Buero Vallejo 1969: 278) will surely present at least a minor headache to the English translator, who will, presumably, be loath to render this as 'Why do you address me in formal terms, father?'. Clearly, a more subtle solution, probably involving attention being paid to paralinguistic features of gesture and body movement, along with the use of appropriately formal or informal syntactic devices and lexical items, would be capable of conveying in English the nature of the conflict between the Father's desire for distance and Vicente's longing for greater intimacy.

Our purpose here is to examine some of these points of contact between the linguistic area of deixis and the practice of translation, but it is also to allude to some of the theoretical issues that a study of deixis raises, concerning the nature of language and of linguistics, and relate these to translation. The focus is, therefore, not only on the translation process itself, but rather on questions about language which are raised by deictic theory, and which are, by extension, of relevance to translation: issues such as the distinction between the description of a linguistic system on the one hand and the characteristics of the use of that system on the other, the relevance of the notion of linguistic universals, the ways in which we establish relationships between different phenomena in our minds and the nature of the link between language and thought. It goes without saying that such questions are large ones and that a comprehensive answer is beyond the scope of this paper. Our intention, however, is to focus on them from the particular perspective of deixis and to suggest their relevance to translation.

THE NATURE OF DEIXIS

It is only since Bühler (1934) that a clear, systematic description of the phenomenon has been available. The context in which Bühler writes is that of a discussion of the psychological nature of linguistic activity. He sets out the three axes of deictic reference (temporal, spatial and personal) and suggests the notion of the *origo* as the 'zero point' of a deictic field of language. The *origo* is fixed by the person who is speaking (the 'I'), the place of utterance (the 'here') and the time of utterance (the 'now'). He suggests that the use of deictic expressions in a speech event entails the assumption of a deictic field in combination with the use of role-play, with the speaker playing the 'I' role, the hearer the 'you' role, etc. Thus, when we hear an utterance such as 'I signed that copy of *Ulysses* yesterday', the words 'I' and 'that' and the tense of the verb provide us with the necessary clues to anchor the utterance in terms of its personal, spatial and temporal parameters, respectively. As Levinson

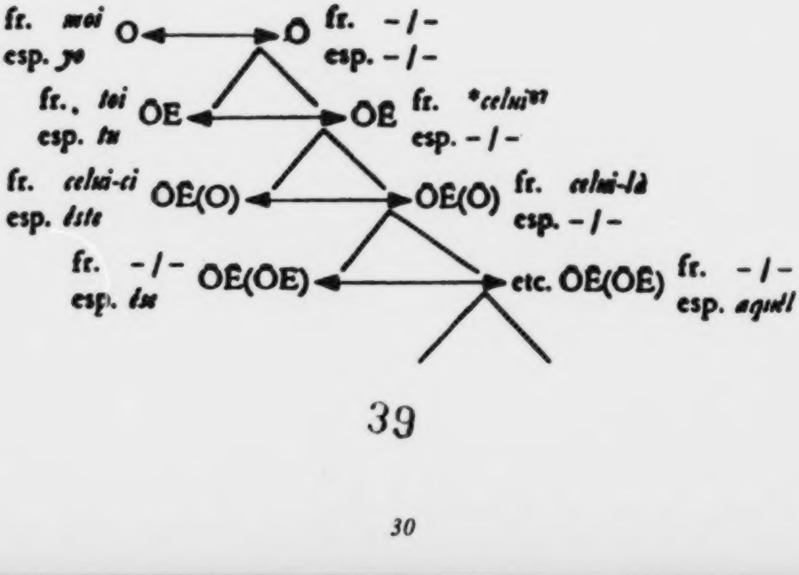
(1992) suggests, what the definition of deixis as formulated here does is to 'reinforce the notion of language as face-to-face interaction', thus, presumably, reinforcing the idea that pragmatics is central to an understanding of how language operates, while also signalling that the concept of deixis straddles the border between semantics and pragmatics. Bühler (1934), and, later, Rauh (1983) and others, refer in their discussions of the phenomenon to the distinction to be drawn between the 'indexical' function in language and the 'symbolic' function. The indexical function (assigning the expression to an extra-linguistic referent) is certainly performed by deictic features. What has sometimes been questioned by later writers is whether these features also have a true symbolic function. Benveniste (1966: 254), for example, refers to pronouns as '...un ensemble de signes 'vides', non référentiels par rapport à la 'réalité', toujours disponibles, et qui deviennent 'pleins' dès qu'un locuteur les assume dans chaque instance de son discours...' What this appears to point to is the constant need to be alert to the interplay, in language generally, and in deictic features in particular, between meanings as they are conveyed via the internal contrasts inherent in the linguistic system, on the one hand, and meanings conveyed through actual use of the language in situations. Rauh (1983) seems to concede this when she suggests that 'the situation is also relevant to the symbolic function'. Thus, the suggestion is that the word 'I', for instance, should be considered as having a core meaning, but that at least part of that meaning relates to the fact that it functions as a 'signpost' to point at the speaker in a situation. The fact that deictic expressions are of an essentially pragmatic nature has its own ramifications for translation. The original text may make reference to entities within the situation, with the result that we are reminded that the context of the original and that of the translation will be different. Thus, the original text is created in one context and the translation is created in *its* context and with its own purpose. Thus, there is a transposition in space and time involved in the act of translating, so that, to this extent at least, translation must be viewed as a creative act with a communicative purpose.

HOW LANGUAGE STRUCTURES DEICTIC RELATIONSHIPS

What this raises for the linguist - as, indeed, for the translator - is the issue of the universality, or otherwise, of the processes referred to. While we can accept at once that the T/V distinction, for example, may apply in one language but not in another, are we to assume that there is a whole range of differences of this nature, relating to a variety of parameters and modes of deixis, between all languages? Furthermore, when we encounter such differences, are we to attribute them to relatively superficial differences between the devices which languages use to convey a 'reality' that is universal, or is it the case that such differences between languages correspond to differences between the ways in which different people perceive the world? While much of modern linguistics is concerned with the task of demonstrating what is seen as the fundamental similarity between all languages, there is a significant tradition of scholarship which questions that assumption and which goes back at least as far as the work of Sapir (1949) and Whorf (1956). Looked at from the point of view of translation, this issue crystallises into the question of translatability and untranslatability: is any text so dependent for its meaning on the culture in which it originates that it is impossible to convey that precise meaning in another language? Or, is it the case that 'anything that can be thought can be expressed', in any language? In order to address this issue through the optique of deixis, let us review briefly the ways in which one can approach the description of systems of spatial deictic relations and attempt to encompass broader issues relating to how language structures deictic relationships generally.

When one attempts to set out a systematic account of deictic features in different languages, a number of approaches are possible. Burdach et al (1984, 1985), for example, present a schema for the comparison of certain deictic features of English, Spanish and French, viz., deictic adjectives and adverbs. The features presented for these languages can be classified relatively neatly to demonstrate interesting formal differences between the ways in which these languages structure the relevant deictic contrasts. However, the relative ease of classification can be attributed to the relative closeness of the three European languages under consideration. A more complex picture would presumably be presented were a European language to be compared, say, to an Amerindian language, or to Eskimo, with its 88 place-deictic adjectives (see Denny 1978). Nonetheless, the nature of the analysis here is essentially rather superficial. It amounts to offering comparisons of the type: 'English *there* is the equivalent of the Spanish *ahí* or *allí*', the usefulness of which is at least questionable. On the other hand, Vernay (1974), imbued with the theories of Bühler, Badinger and Heger, in his discussion of the spatial and personal deictic features of French, German, Spanish and Catalan, attempts to include a 'tertium comparationis' which would be non-linguistic. He presents a semantic analysis of the features concerned, adopting an onomasiological approach, which begins by positing a fundamental distinction between *I* and *not-I*. *Not-I* can then de subdivided into '*Not-I* which is proximate to the interlocutor' and '*Not-I* which is not proximate to the interlocutor', and so on. By this means, he ends up with a schema which looks as follows:

Figure 1. Analysis of deictic locations (Vernay 1974)



While Vernay's work represents an interesting search for theoretical abstraction in relation to the semantics of deictic features, the main problem with it is that it eschews all reference to the ways in which these features are actually *used* in the language, and hence fails to account for the pragmatic aspects of deictic features. Given that, as suggested by Levinson (1992), deixis is an area that 'straddles the semantics/pragmatics border', presumably no account which fails to tackle the two areas will be adequate. The inadequacy of Vernay's account can be exemplified by the fact that he implies a close correspondence between the system of personal deictic features, on the one hand, and the system of spatial features on the other. Thus, the Spanish demonstrative *ese* is presented as being exclusively associated with the area of reference of the second person singular. As I have attempted to show elsewhere, and as speakers of the language know from practice, the reality of the use of *ese* is that it is at least as frequently associated with the area of reference of *él/ella* as of *tú* (see Richardson, forthcoming). While it is tempting to treat these complexities as an irritating irrelevance, and, indeed, it may be that there are times when they may usefully be ignored in order to concentrate on specific facets of language, a study which aims at accounting for the operation of deixis in language would obviously need to take account of these irregularities, and, indeed, explain the contexts in which it may be appropriate to ignore them.

What is striking about the above approaches to the description of deixis is their fundamentally paradigmatic nature. The focus of the attention of these authors is the meaning of individual lexical items, considered in isolation from the contexts in which they are used, contrasted with other lexical items which are meant to designate other specific meanings or refer to other particular spatial, temporal or personal 'locations'. In other words, their conception is fundamentally a structuralist one, based on contrasts that are posited as existing within any particular language, or across different languages.

When we look at some of the modern literature on deictic theory, on the other hand, it is notable that the emphasis is frequently placed not on the explanation of how particular items operate to refer to particular locations, but rather on the *relationship* which is established between a (backgrounded) reference point and a (foregrounded) deictic feature.

In his discussion of the way in which language structures spatial relationships, Talmy (1983) suggests that the basic principle in operation appears to be something like Principle (P):

(P) Languages encode asymmetric oppositions among objects

Such encoding is taken to refer to deictic or non-deictic spatial relationships. Thus, consider, for instance, the use of the preposition 'in' in sentence (1):

(1) John is in front of the car.

The preposition fulfils the function of explicitly encoding the relation of John to the car.

The use of the (deictic) demonstrative *this* in the phrase 'This book...' *implicitly* encodes the relation of the book to *me* (the speaker). Similarly, we could suggest that the sentence:

(2) John is coming

encodes John's direction of movement to *me*. Talmy terms this asymmetrical relationship an opposition between Figure and Ground. Thus, in (1) John is the Figure and the car is the backgrounded object, i.e., the Ground. The relations are asymmetric in the sense that it does matter which one is the topic of the sentence. Compare, for example, sentences (3) and (4):

(3) The bike is near the house
(4) ? The house is near the bike

The questionable status of (4) is surely related to the implicit assumptions made about the entity referred to as *house* in the way the sentence is formed. In other words, the reference assignments made in (4) seem not to match the familiar world: houses are perhaps not small enough, or not movable enough, to be referred to in the terms suggested here. Even if we consider the sentence:

(5) ?The bike and the house are near each other

we might feel that the sentence sounds odd, because it seems to imply that a house can be a floating entity or movable point, to the same extent as a bike. Talmy concludes from examples such as these that the characteristics of Primary and Secondary Objects (i.e., of Figure and Ground) are as presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Characteristics of Figure and Ground
(after Talmy 1983)

Primary Object	**Secondary Object**
a. has spatial variables to be determined	a. acts as a reference object with known spatial characteristics
b. is more movable	b. is more permanently located
c. is smaller	c. is larger
d. conceived as geometrically simpler	d. is taken to have greater geometric complexity
e. is more salient	e. is more backgrounded
f. is more recently on the scene or in awareness	f. is earlier on the scene or in awareness

We would suggest that the above applies not just to spatial deictic relationships, but to deictic relationships generally, including those associated with personal and temporal features. Seen in this light, for instance, the German pronoun *du* is not so much a reference to a particular individual as a reference to a *relationship*, established at the moment of utterance, between the speaker (in this case, the Ground) and his or her interlocutor (the Figure). References to *yesterday* or *tomorrow* are, again, not so much references to particular points in time as references to a temporal relationship set up between the *now* of the speaker and a time zone that is previous to, or subsequent to, that zone.

The deictic element of the message being conveyed is often unproblematic and straightforward: a time relationship indicated by a tense or a speaker's spatial relationship to an object indicated by the use of a proximal deictic particle. Sometimes, however, the deixis seems to convey nuances of meaning and attitude that are difficult to describe and explain. This is particularly so in the case of what is referred to as 'dislocated deixis' (what Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980, p. 62 refers to as *énallage*). Examples are the use of, say, the third person forms to refer to one's interlocutor, or the use of a Past Tense form to make reference to what is, in fact, an event taking place in the present. In these instances, the *normal* relationship between the deictic feature and its referent is altered. We think, for example, of the *normal* meaning of the English Past Tense as relating to past time. Yet, sentence 6, employing a 'past tense' can readily be used in relation to a present desire to purchase shoes, if, for example, I am talking to a sales assistant in a shoe-shop at the time of utterance:

"Can I help you?"
(6) "Yes, I was looking for a pair of brown shoes.

An example of 'personal dislocation' would be the use of, for example, the third person in the French parent's utterances to a small child, of the type:

(7) Alors il était fâché mon bébé. Il ne voulait pas manger sa soupe?...(taken from Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980)

or in the context where a nurse is talking to a patient:

(8) And how are we today then?

We would suggest that a useful way of interpreting these, in deictic terms, is to see them as instances of the reversal of the *normal* Figure-Ground relationship discussed by Talmy. The *self-referential* quality of such utterances seems to be associated with such a reversal, in the sense that what is more nuanced (more differentiated) in these cases is the sociolinguistic dimension of the speaker, i.e., of the entity normally associated with the background rather than the overt *Figure*.

DEIXIS AND TRANSLATION

The questions raised, at least implicitly, in the discussion so far, have to do with issues such as the nature of grammatical description, the relationships between grammatical system and actual use, the relationship between language and thought, and the inadequacy of formalist/structuralist approaches to the discussion of deictic features. What is being suggested is that these issues are central not only to a consideration of the nature of language but also to discussions of translation theory, since translation is a linguistic activity. It may be useful at this point to take the question the other way around, i.e., to look briefly at some of the ways in which deixis is transferred across linguistic boundaries in translation, after which our discussion can return to the central linguistic issues. The discussion of translation difficulties is necessarily very limited, based as it is on translation between English, French and Spanish, and on a small, selected number of points of difficulty.

In examples (9) to (14) we will see instances of what could be termed 'standard' deixis-related translation problems. They appear here free of any context and, in that sense, do not appear in the form in which a translator is likely to encounter them. Nonetheless, we can appreciate some of the shifts in point of view and changes of linguistic device that are required in order to achieve an adequate rendering of the original deictics. Thus, the obligatory explicit reference to spatial location in the English in example (9) is not matched in the Spanish equivalent (9a).

(9) Is Juan there?
(9a) ¿Está Juan?

Nor is the obligatory choice between proximal and distal forms in the English in example 10 matched in the French equivalent (10a) where *ce* corresponds to either proximal or distal.

(10) this/that project
(10a) ce projet

The crossing concept conveyed (in Examples 11a and 11b) in the relevant morpheme of the verbs *traverser* and *atravesar* requires, in the English (11), a transposition to the preposition *through*.

(11) to go through the forest
(11a) traverser la foret
(11b) atravesar el bosque

A double transposition of this kind is illustrated in the equivalents given in Example 12.

(12) bajar/subir/entrar/salir corriendo
(12a) to run down/up/in/out

In these cases, as in Example 13, where the notion of 'coming' has to be switched to the notion of 'going', the modulation is obligatory and is clear.

(13) ¡Antonio! - ¡Voy!/J'y vais
(13a) ¡Antonio! - I'm coming!

In other cases, however, the choice is not always as obvious: the selection of *this* or *that* in English can be difficult and can be complicated by stylistic considerations, as in Example 14:

(14) *...el que solemos llamar país extranjero tiene que ser lejano, pero no demasiado, porque en este caso pasaría a ser un país exótico, que es otra cosa...*

(F. Fernán Gómez, El País, 22 June 1986)

(14a) *...what we call a foreign country has to be far away, but not too far, as in this/that case it would be considered an exotic country, which is a different thing altogether...*

Much greater difficulties can arise, however, when the focus is on what we have referred to above as examples of 'dislocated deixis'.

An interesting example of the difficulties associated with the translation of dislocated deixis can be found in the translation of Federico García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1945). In this work there are several examples of tenses used in a 'dislocated' way. Thus, for instance, the use of the 'future of conjecture' by Amelia when she and Martirio are commenting on the absence of Adelaida from their father's funeral in Act One:

(15) **Amelia.** De todo tiene la culpa esta crítica que no nos deja vivir. Adelaida *habrá pasado* mal rato.

The Penguin translation of the play (García Lorca 1947) offers the following version of the above:

(15a) **Amelia.** The whole trouble is all these wagging tongues that won't let us live. Adelaida *has probably had* a bad time.

The point about Adelaida's suffering, however, is that Amelia and her interlocutor, Martirio, both already *know* that she has suffered - indeed, it is probably safe to assume that *all* the neighbours know quite a lot of detail already about Adelaida's suffering (caused by her being mistreated first by a violent father and then by a violent husband). What is happening here is that her suffering is being alluded to by Adelaida in the context of making a more general point. She is, thus, referring in passing to something which is already background knowledge for both herself and Martirio. What the dislocated tense conveys is that there is something special or unusual about the speaker's attitude to the event referred to. Normally, this is the hypothetical quality of the event; in this instance, we would suggest, the reference to the action has the quality of quotativity or intertextuality discussed, for instance, in Reyes (1990). Thus, while what in our view is a weak translation (15a) focuses on the formal structure of the utterance and renders it as if it were conveying the notion of a considered guess, a more appropriate translation would take account of the intertextual qualities of the temporal reference, and might appear, for instance, as in (15b):

(15b) **Amelia.** It's this incessant gossiping that's really to blame: how can you live in peace with it! *You can imagine what Adelaida has had to put up with.*

LINGUISTIC ISSUES

System and use

To the extent that one can perceive regularities in a language, one can formulate rules in relation to it, one can abstract rules from behaviour. The rules so formulated have a certain validity, within the terms in which they are formulated. It is useful, for instance, to be able to make certain distinctions between particular demonstrative pronouns within a particular language, to formulate generalisations about the ways in which they differ from one another. What one achieves by this is to move towards the Saussurean objective of setting out the basic system by which the language operates. As Saussure suggested, however, actual use of the language in situations may be at variance with the abstract rules posited to exist at the level of *langue*. We have already alluded to the problem of defining the meaning of 'second person' Spanish locatives and demonstratives. It is difficult to find a grammar of Spanish which does not suggest an almost absolute correspondence between second person singular pronouns and these medial locatives and demonstratives, and yet, as was suggested earlier, the fact is that such a close correspondence is not to be found when one examines actual use of Spanish. We would suggest that the implications of this for translation are in the area of reminding us that the act of translation does not consist of 'mapping' one linguistic system on to another. As has been suggested, it would be difficult to locate the system: what does 'system' consist of, if the formulation of a system is an act that is performed on language, i.e., an attempt to divine the rules that are posited to exist in the language in question?

Universality

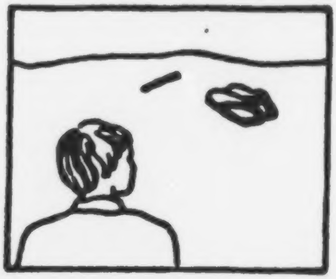
While there is no doubt that a consideration of deixis reinforces the notion of the enormous diversity of language (compare Eskimo's 88 different place-deictic adjectives with the few to be found in European languages), there does appear to be at least one generalisation that can be made about this area of language, which is that there appears to be a fundamental distinction in all languages of the type 'proximal-distal' (English *here-there*). The question for translation is presum-ably related to the issue of how deep these differences between languages go. Nida (1983), Vázquez-Ayora (1977, p.49) and others suggest that translation is, in effect, the process of analysing the surface structure of a string, identifying elements of its deep structure, and then reformulating the result in terms of the Target Language. Steiner (1977) summarises this issue in terms of a debate between *monadism* and *universalism*, the monadist view being that 'universal deep structures are fathomless to logical and psychological investigation or of an order so abstract, so generalised as to be well-nigh trivial... What passes for translation is a convention of approximate analogies, a rough-cast similitude, just tolerable when the two relevant languages or cultures are cognate, but altogether spurious when remote tongues and far-removed sensibilities are in question.' The universalist thesis is, of course, that the underlying structure of language is universal and that differences between languages are essentially superficial. To translate is, then, 'to descend beneath the exterior disparities of two languages in order to bring into vital play their analogous, and, at the final depths, common principles of being.' (Steiner 1977: 74)

Language and thought

One of the tenets on which most of modern linguistics is founded is the suggestion of the complete arbitrariness of the relationship between form and content, what Saussure (1980) termed *l'arbitraire du signe*. Yet, others have questioned that commitment to extreme arbitrariness, most notably those already mentioned (Sapir 1949 and Whorf 1956). While few would nowadays defend the 'strong' version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis which suggests that we think the way we do because of the language that we speak, there is at least a strong defence of the argument that, at the very least, language somehow 'mediates' reality. Such a view is not only held explicitly by post-structuralists such as Derrida and others (see Sturrock 1979) and Feyerabend (1975), but is also implicit in the recent work of linguists who are interested in the question of 'iconicity' (see, for example, Givón 1991). Does our world-view depend, then, on our language? In deictic terms, does our perception of, say, spatial relations vary according to the language we speak? And, in terms of translation, should all translation be considered just a 'quasi-translational activity', on the grounds that thoughts are uniquely construed in any specific language and, therefore, no other language is capable of construing them in quite the same way? Once again, at the heart of this question is the issue of 'translatability' and, at the very least, the reminder that meaning is always context-dependent, and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to chart a one-to-one correspondence between the Source Language message and its effect and the Target Language message and effect.

While it would be extremely difficult - apart from being unfashionable - to attempt to undertake a defence of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, it is interesting to note that there is research in the area of deixis that at least raises questions about its opposite extreme, viz., absolute arbitrariness. Hill (1982) reports on a study of the responses he obtained from speakers of English and Hausa, respectively, when they were asked to describe the location of an object as represented in a line drawing (reproduced in Figure 2).

Figure 2. (Hill 1982:34)



The choices available to the respondents for locating the pen were: A, to the left of; B, in front of; C, behind and D, to the right of, the sandals. The replies which predominated were A and C. According to Hill, speakers who chose reply A were adopting a deictic strategy for locating the pen, in the sense that the position of the pen was being described in relation to their own location, while the choice of C indicated a non-deictic strategy, since the pen's location was being related not to the speaker's own location but to that of the sandals. The results showed a markedly different tendency in each of the two groups. The English native speakers opted mainly for a deictic strategy while the Hausa native speakers preferred a non-deictic strategy. While not being in any way conclusive, this test does at least appear to suggest that our language *may* go some way towards influencing the way in which we perceive spatial relations.

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Exploration, Challenge and Change in the Teaching of Irish at Post-Primary Level

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines some of the implications of introducing the concept of learner autonomy into the communicative model for teaching Irish. It is partly based on research undertaken by the author and other teachers in post-primary schools 1989 - 1992, in conjunction with the Council of Europe's Research and Development Programme on investigating learner strategies and learner autonomy.

Reference is made to recent innovations in Irish language pedagogy and to the sociolinguistic and educational factors which set it apart from the main thrust of the communicative model generally employed in modern language pedagogy. It purports to show how implementation of self-directed learning in Irish in the context of these recent innovations may be more conducive to creating more realistic communicative situations in the classroom.

The research identifies some of the key forms of interaction which tend to promote good communication. The paper will focus on the key concepts of negotiation, choice and critical reflection as applied throughout the project as well as the challenges posed by implementation of self-directed learning in Irish class. It emphasises the need for a new approach to classroom communication and learning strategies in the teaching of Irish.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based largely on grounded theory. The experience on which I base my observations includes teaching Irish for 10 years in a secondary school, and participating for two years, between 1990 - '92 in a project investigating learner autonomy in conjunction with the Council of Europe's Research and Development programme.

My personal involvement in this research and development project as a teacher of Irish to a Junior Certificate class of 19 boys has convinced me of the need to explore further the autonomous language learning model in order to achieve more realistic communicative situations in the classroom.

My purpose here, therefore, is to describe how promoting autonomous language learning, or implementing self-directed learning in the teaching of Irish, seemed to achieve more fully the communicative ideal, on which the present syllabus is based. My findings here are based largely on my own 'soft' data as a teacher and as a co-participant with my learners, but they also draw on some of the general documentation contained in the final report of our research group, which was presented at a recent Council of Europe workshop, Number 2B, in Heinola, Finland.

I shall refer to some of the general documentation in this final report in the course of this paper to support my individual experience and findings.

A Communicative Curriculum for Irish: The need for clarification

Over the past number of years, the teaching of Irish has increasingly adopted features of the communicative approach. The Curriculum and Examinations Board (CEB) in a discussion paper, *Language in the Curriculum*, published in 1985, strongly advocated the adoption of such an approach in Irish language pedagogy:

> If the teaching of Irish as L2 is to make a particular contribution to the development of pupils as a learner, a communicator and a social being, recent developments in knowledge about language and language learning must be taken into consideration... The method of the communicative approach... is generally applicable to Irish as well as to foreign languages. (p.30)

In 1986, Little, Ó Murchú and Singleton created a useful framework for further developments in communicative teaching in *Towards a Communicative Curriculum for Irish*. These publications were all part of a wider movement towards the exploitation of the communicative approach at all levels, in particular at Junior Certificate level, where the syllabus is now explicitly communicative.

There are, however, certain discriminatory factors which set Irish language teaching apart from the main thrust of the communicative model as generally employed in modern language pedagogy. In their application of the communicative model to the case of Irish, some of these factors, both sociolinguistic and educational, were isolated by Little, Ó Murchú and Singleton (1986: 4-6). For our purposes here it is necessary to refer to some of these factors again.

One of the main sociolinguistic factors which sets Irish apart in this context is the fact that it is a 'lesser used language' used by speakers, who are by in large bilingual. It is an apparent lack of what could be termed 'environmental support' for the language as well as the absence of domains within which the need to communicate exclusively in Irish is dominant which undermine the efficacy of using a communicative approach to teaching the language.

It is little wonder, given this particular sociolinguistic background, that efforts to stimulate the tourist-type situations have worn thin with many of our learners. There is no urgent need to prepare learners in the case of Irish for that alien situation in which they need to survive, which is the objective of the function and situation-based syllabuses. It has been my experience that students have seen through the ruse and that efforts to engage their motivation in mimicry of communicative situations such as booking a room in a hotel or guest-house or in asking directions while working from a map of O'Connell St. have been doomed to arouse at the best a benign indifference, among even the more eager learners! This was and continues to be one of the reasons why a communicative approach has regrettably been deemed unsuitable in Irish language pedagogy (Ó Dubhghaill and Ó Súilleabháin 1986: 13-16).

There are of course other factors, sociolinguistic and educational, which differentiate communicative Irish language pedagogy from foreign language teaching. The contraction of social contexts and domains in which the language is used has narrowed the range of appropriate authentic materials and text-types. There is also the educational factor that Irish is regarded as a core subject throughout the curriculum and that it is the first language of a certain minority of primary and post-primary learners. These are important differences, but the central concern for purposes of the present paper is the significant sociolinguistic difference of urgency or need which necessarily separates Irish language pedagogy from modern language communicative models.

This very difference was stressed from the beginning in the curriculum literature, and it was envisaged that the 'need' or 'urgency' factor intrinsic to FL situations would have to be created in the Irish language classroom. It was proposed that teachers could improvise and simulate real communicative situations. Working from this premise, the CEB document went on to stress:

> While many pupils may not see any need to learn Irish because of lack of environmental support for the language, it may be possible to motivate them, at least in the short term, by creating a need to use Irish in the accomplishment of meaningful activities which appeal to their interests and imagination... In particular Irish can be used in the classroom activities and at an appropriate stage to talk about the language. (*Language in the Curriculum* p.31)

It can be argued, of course, in this respect, that Irish has been used as the language of classroom interaction in day-to-day transactional behaviour since the inception of the state. This classroom discourse, characterised typically by imperatives, interrogatives and by the language of praise and admonition (*Osclaigi na leabhair. An bhfuil cead agam? Cá bhfuil d'obair bhaile? Bigi ciúin. etc.*) remains by and large *extrinsic* to pupils' real communicative needs and does not necessarily form part of any sequential learning programme. Furthermore Gillian Donmall in James and Garrett (1991: 112) in her discussion of language awareness has isolated the difficulties which learners encounter with a monolingual instructional discourse. All this raises important questions about the efficacy of total immersion in the target language especially in classroom interactional and transactional dialogues.

Even though teachers of Irish have been endeavoured to maximise the use of Irish in such transactional discourse, it needs to be stressed that there may rarely have been room in this type of monolingual teaching for 'mitteilungsbezogene Kommunikation' (Black and Butzmann 1977) or 'message-oriented communication' (Klippel 1984: 4). This refers to those spontaneous and all too infrequent moments in language teaching when the target language is actually used as a means of purposeful and real communication.

Working as a participant in a research project initiated by Joe Sheils and supported by ITÉ gave me the opportunity to promote more meaningful communication of this type in the classroom.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The project began on a experimental basis at the beginning of the academic year 1989 - 1990. The idea at the outset was to explore the possibilities of developing autonomous language learning in the context of second-level education and thereby to discover how one can create and develop teaching/learning situations where learners are made aware of and responsible for their own process. In 1990, it became a participating project in the Council of Europe's ongoing research and development programme investigating learner strategies and learner autonomy. The aims of the project which involved teachers and learners of Irish, French, German and Spanish were as follows:

- *To help learners understand and personalise the objectives contained in the Junior Certificate Syllabus.*

- *To give learners a say in choosing material for classwork and homework.*

- *To raise learners' awareness of the strategies they use to manage their learning individually and co-operatively.*

- *To provide opportunities for learners to evaluate their work, both process and product, in relation to language learning.*

This is what I set out to achieve in my Irish class between 1990 - 1992.

METHODS AND KEY CONCEPTS

My Irish class of 19 students of mixed ability joined the project in September 1990. I began, as did the other participant teachers by introducing them to the Junior Certificate syllabus and asked them as a result to set out their own objectives for learning Irish. Firstly, I gathered soft data gauging their reactions to and comments on the following set of open questions:

1. *Why are you learning this language?*
2. *What do you hope to do with this language?*

We conducted this exercise partly in English, partly in Irish. I felt immediately that they were eager to be given the opportunity to be consulted. Partial discussion in English helped here because such a discussion involved a complexity of language use that they may not have been able to handle in the target language.

Their comments, predictable to a large extent, were nonetheless interesting and challenging to me as a teacher. What I engaged in unwittingly, was, in a sense, the first faltering and all too belated step towards allowing the students to develop some sense of language awareness through the important process of bridging the gap between L1 and L2 (James and Garrett 1991 and Hawkins 1992). The experiment uncovered reasons for wanting to learn Irish which were less predictable or which I would not have expected at all:

- *'I enjoy the language'*
- *'I love the sound of the* **ch***'*
- *'I like some words how they sound'*

Up to this point I had been blissfully ignorant of what my students' real perceptions and attitudes were. Their comments indicated however that they as learners were expressing legitimate and personalised reasons which I could have too easily taken for granted in the context of a different agenda and scheme of classroom interaction.

The first challenge which had been met was to invite learners to communicate at least some of their perceptions in the target language. I tried to meet this challenge by exploiting the concept of negotiation. Van Ek (1991: 79) has explained what is meant by negotiation in this concept:

> Il est regrettable que ce terme soit provocant aux yeux d'un grand nombre de personnes pour qu'il suppose l'existance de conflits d'intérêts. Dans la présente étude, nous l'utilisons au sens plus neytre de Discussion, entretien afin de parvenir àun accord.

Holec (1981) has delineated the components of negotiation to be as follows:

- *choosing aims and purposes.*
- *choosing materials, methods and task.*
- *exercising choice and purpose in organising and carrying out the chosen tasks.*
- *choosing criteria for evaluation and using them in evaluation.*

We as a group drew on this concept of negotiation (contract). It was in trying to implement this stage of negotiation I discovered that teaching Irish could be more communicative, in a sense that it became intrinsically purposeful. Once the parameters of all interactions had been defined in terms of syllabus and redefined in a personalised syllabus, the students were fully aware that learning Irish and learning to learn Irish were the tasks in hand. When they started to assume control over and responsibility for what they wanted to learn vis à vis the syllabus, Irish became more meaningful. At the initial stages, there was an eager enthusiasm tinged with an unsettling suspicion that teacher was just engaging in another (!) adventurous methodology (more than likely after yet another (!) INSET course (!)) in which they, the pupils were expected to function like test tube chemicals. However, the enthusiasm gradually deepened when it became synonymous with a new perception of the teacher as a co-participant rather than the sole authority or the benign dictator in the learning process.

This demanded at the outset, a total rethinking and restructuring of my concepts of school teaching and learning. This is why the present paper is entitled specifically *'Challenge and Change'*. In a real sense, this approach called for a radical adjustment in my role as teacher. This 'challenge' is real for all teachers who try to promote an autonomous approach. Holec (1988: 6) quoting Jurgen Krumm (1984) has described this challenge as follows:

...the teacher should become himself an autonomous learner-teacher, so as to be able to impart learning autonomy to his own pupils.

Thus, when I was asked feebly by Ian, a rock music fanatic if he could 'do' music as his contract, I found that I had to 'let go'. This feeling of unsettling uneasiness was somewhat exasperated when he posed as a personal objective to be able to record pop videos from television and to do a running commentary on them in Irish. But when I allowed myself to become a willing co-participant with him in the process, it opened up avenues for real and purposeful communication with him in the classroom. He asked me for a dictionary and to comment on his articles. We also discussed the different songs he had selected and he seemed to be learning the appropriate vocabulary as he needed it.

This learning situation generated a new enthusiasm in Ian for learning Irish. Prior to this, he had been somewhat silent, stiff and watchful. Now, he had become eager, energetic and enthusiastic and was using Irish to communicate in a new way with me and with his fellow students who wanted to become involved in his project.

This success with Ian reflects what Irma Huttunen has written (1986:95):

- A learner is fully autonomous when he is working individually or in a group, taking responsibility for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of his studies; the learner cannot, of course, be fully autonomous within the framework of a nation-wide curriculum, but the more responsibility he is given in any of the three areas of planning, monitoring and evaluation, the more autonomous he is.

At an early stage in our research project, influenced by Dam and Gabrielsen (1988), we decided to invite learners to keep a diary in which they would record what they had done, what they had learned, how they had learned it and how they felt about it. This served the necessary and dual purpose of giving some retrospective dimension to the learning process, making it more real and tangible while, at the same time allowing it to serve as a focus for critical reflection and analysis by both learner and teacher.

Again as in the process of negotiation and contract, the students used Irish as much as possible in the course of this reflection, and were enabled to detect weaknesses and deficiencies in their own learning activities/strategies. From one such session of critical reflection, it emerged, for example that students had encountered much difficulty in understanding the Northern dialect (canúint an Tuaiscirt). From this, we were able to plan a project on this dialect with explanations, examples, advice and exercises. The other students found this work very helpful at a later stage.

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

The present discussion is based largely on observations which I noted when trying to promote autonomy in irregular and sporadic two to three week periods over two years. The present paper does not allow scope for a more detailed description of the various activities and end-results of our learning situations. I shall confine my examples of communicative situations, therefore, to some case studies which I made. The following short examples reflect to a large degree the general observations documented in the final report of our research group presented at the Council of Europe Workshop in Finland in 1993.

One aspect of interest was *the confidence factor*. The gradual transfer of responsibility from teacher to pupils conferred a new sense of confidence on shy and diffident learners. Brian A. was one example of a shy learner who tended to feel 'left out' in what I was foolishly happy to deem as 'communicative classes' up to then. In the course of our project, he stipulated in his contract that he would write an article on fashion. Here, my input as teacher was one of acting as guide and consultant. I asked him what he liked in particular about fashion, and, while the communication in Irish was halting and hesitant to begin with; it was now purposeful and real for Brian.

I put him in contact with two other students whose contracts specified similar interests. Eventually, he produced an article on 'jeans' which we photocopied and gave to the class as a reading comprehension in another context. I noticed to my sheer delight, as he sought help from his fellow learners and from me that he had gained the confidence to try to communicate entirely in Irish.

Thomas and Robert posed as their personal objective (contract) to become good at reading poetry and short stories. When they asked me to recommend suitable texts, I had an opportunity to discuss with them what they would like to read. Together we selected materials and they reacted to them, unmediated in their reaction by me. Their response was more real and came from within, rather than one imposed on them from the outside.

Up to this point in teaching, I had always expected learners to like texts which had been chosen for them (the hidden agenda being - I think that you should read and like this). This was a new insight which challenged me and my role in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

What I have outlined here contains little that is new, startling or innovative. Teachers of Irish would recognise many of the activities in which learners were engaged during these teaching/learning units (group work, games, reading, discussing, conversations, drama, listening activities). However, all these tasks were characterised by the fact that learners were less dependent on me as a teacher to provide the main stimulus and input in an expository way. Initially, this generated a certain unease among some of the more 'exam-orientated' students who were anxious and suspicious that the course was not being followed 'properly'.

However, this unease was often sublimated into an eager enthusiasm and into a welcome tolerance of uncertainty when they realised that the process was meaningful and helpful. It is in this sense that the Irish classroom can be perceived as a valid communicative situation, rather than a rehearsal studio for the world outside which may have little to sustain the motivation of many learners of Irish.

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The Year Abroad - A Linguistic Challenge

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comparative overview of studies based on Year Abroad Programmes and deals with the linguistic achievements and setbacks experienced by a group of Irish DaF year abroad students. In particular, it highlights the limitations of students lacking in linguistic awareness and validates the need for a concomitant grammatical structure that keeps pace with their (almost inevitable) improvement in fluency. The widely held belief that time spent in the target culture almost automatically guarantees gains in language proficiencies, results in students embarking on their Year Abroad with the illusion that minimal effort is required to improve their Foreign Language (FL) skills. This is not to say that **no** language gains are made in the proficiencies, yet much of the progress made can be minimal and it is becoming more apparent that students need to be better informed of how to maximise on the language rich environment in which they find themselves. Students regularly return from the Year Abroad in a German speaking country having progressed largely in the area of fluency and lexis but only marginally on the level of grammatical accuracy. Based on this observation over several years a longitudinal research project was undertaken within the German Department UCD in May 1991. The purpose of the research was to monitor the linguistic progress of undergraduate students during their Year Abroad in the target culture. The research is an evaluation of the Year Abroad in terms of linguistic development with specific reference to grammatical accuracy in the spoken language. The central question of the study queries whether it is possible for a student to spend an extended period of time in the target culture and not progress on the level of grammatical accuracy. The aim of the study is to look closely at the linguistic data obtained and provide assistance to future year abroad students, primarily in the form of practical guidelines, on how to maximise linguistically on their year abroad. This article describes similar Study Abroad research conducted by other institutions; briefly outlines the structure of the German Department research; elaborates on the project data analysed so far; and summarises some conclusions of the Year Abroad study.[1]

STUDY ABROAD RESEARCH

Considering the scale and popularity of exchange programmes very little research has been completed in relation to language learning during the Year Abroad on a national basis. The research described here is restricted to a small number of GFL students within one institution and although the results may coincide with research results from other institutions it does not provide a more global overview of the language learning scenario during the year abroad, but one specific to Irish DaF (Deutsch als Fremdsprache) undergraduates.[2] More wide scale research in relation to Study Abroad Programmes has been undertaken by:

a) The European Institute of Education and Social Policy who initiated a project in 1982 to analyse a range of Study Abroad Programmes (SAP), and evaluate the extent to which SAP outcomes can be regarded as successful. Their research explores the potential causes for the nature and degree of success achieved. The study did not deal exclusively with language gains during the SAP and the analysis of proficiency gains forms only a small part of the overall project but it concluded that very substantial gains in FL proficiency were a result of the SAP. The study looks at language proficiency overall rather than analysing specific modalities/skills.[3]

b) A further study is that supported by the Commission of the European Communities 1989 which deals with ERASMUS students. In this study, student replies are outlined according to country of origin and therefore provide information in relation to Irish students. It became evident that it is predominantly 'Those students who observe a strong emphasis on independent study abroad and less emphasis on the teacher as the main source of information' who seem to study somewhat more successfully abroad. This would imply that 'improvements of the study conditions at the host university would help increase academic recognition during the Study Abroad period and ensure academic recognition upon return ... academic preparation at the home university is not a trivial factor for academic success during the Study Abroad period'.[4]

c) A third study is that dealing with the experiences of American Undergraduates partaking in SAPs and since researchers focus exclusively on the impacts of SAPs on native English speakers, so many of the conclusions provide interesting theories for application to the Year Abroad study based on Irish students.[5]

d) The most analytical study abroad research undertaken, with specific reference to improvement in foreign language skills, is the research by the National Foreign Language Centre (NFLC).[6]

e) Examples of study abroad research conducted within a single institution are those by:

    i) Lennon (1990). His procedures for the monitoring of German EFL students during their year abroad are broadly similar to those employed in the German Department Year Abroad study, and many of the observations and results show interesting parallels to our own.[7]

    ii) De Keyser, R.M. (1991) focuses on the transition from the classroom to the native-speaking environment. He concludes that 'the results of the study do not suggest a strong dichotomy between learning language in the classroom and picking it up abroad, or between grammar and oral proficiency'.[8]

iii) B.F. Freed (1990) examined whether or not students who maintained the greatest amount of out-of-class contact would be those who made the greatest gains in achievement and proficiency during their study abroad period. She concludes that 'the amount of out-of-class contact does not seem to influence measurable class performance'.[9]

STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The Year Abroad research project consists of the following phases:

1. a) Pre-Year Abroad Questionnaire
  b) Post-Year Abroad Questionnaire
  c) Follow-up interview
  d) Correspondence

2. The SES (Soziolinguistisches Erhebungsinstrument zur Sprachentwicklung) Oral Interviews/Recordings/Transcriptions

3. Error Analysis
  a) Native Speaker impressions/Non-Native Speaker analysis
  b) Group and individual student profiles

1(a) and 1(b) The study involves 2 questionnaires, one pre-Year Abroad and one post-Year Abroad. These questionnaires elicit responses relating to student linguistic profile; attitude towards German language, culture and people; positive and negative aspects of the year abroad; self-rating of language skills before, during and after the year abroad; information on study habits during the year abroad; a comparison of the pre- and post-Year Abroad questionnaires provides information on how students self-rate their progress; changes in attitude towards the home and target culture; study habits and learning strategies whilst abroad.

(c) An analysis of the questionnaires was carried out and subsequently each student was requested to attend a follow-up interview in order to provide supplementary information or explain certain responses they had made.

(d) A further section of the research includes correspondence from students during their year abroad outlining administrative difficulties, impressions, information on their daily activities. This information supplements the information provided in the pre- and post-Year Abroad Questionnaires, the follow-up interviews and the SES language tests.

2. The SES oral interviews

The second part of the study consists of recordings and transcripts of interviews with 15 of the 1991/92 Year Abroad cohort. Of the 15 students:

9 are B.A. (5 Leaving Cert, 4 Ab Initio.), 6 are B.Comm. International (2 Leaving Cert. 4 Ab Initio.)

These interviews serve as the data base and were conducted before, during and after the 8-12 month period in Germany using the 'Soziolinguistisches Erhebungsinstrument zur Sprachentwicklung' (SES) a sociolinguisitic elicitation technique designed by Pfaff and Portz at the Pädagosisches Institut Berlin.[10] This consists of a series of 20 pictures (Bildmaterial) designed to elicit linguistic data on the level of morphology, syntax, lexis and pragmatics. The same series of pictures was used on all three occasions thus facilitating both the monitoring and comparison of linguistic progress in the area of grammatical accuracy over the course of the Year Abroad. On the second and third round the SES materials were supplemented with an informal conversation providing the student with more scope and the interviewer with more linguistic data and information on day to day experiences in the foreign culture.

3. The Error Analysis

a) Native Speaker Impressions /Non-native Speaker Analysis

The recordings of the SES interviews were first listened to by Native German Speakers who noted their impressions of each individual student's overall progress.[11] Using both NNSs and NSs to record impressions of the proficiencies creates a balance - deficiencies are recorded but students are given credit for skills developed.

b) Group and Individual Linguistic Profile/Case Studies

The data corpus consists of 45 recordings (15 students x three interviews each). The preliminary NS analysis of the interviews gave some indication of which error categories to look at more closely in the ensuing detailed error analysis conducted by the NNS instructor. This detailed analysis involved the development of a cross-sectional profile and a longitudinal profile of each student and ultimately a profile of the total group. The overview of oral performance at the three phases facilitates the identification of both problem areas and areas of progress. As with all Error Analysis (EA) studies conducted in the area of FLL, the interpretation and classification of errors is a complex task.[12] When attempting to categorise an error the question constantly arises, whether it is possible to differentiate between an utterance which is communicatively successful (but possibly erroneous), and an utterance which is grammatically accurate. What must be kept in mind in relation to this analysis of oral data is that the objective was not simply to draw up lists of errors but to gain an insight into areas of difficulty, regression, progress, stability in oral performance. The overall objective being to provide feedback to students and Year Abroad co-ordinators, in order to help students maximise on their Year Abroad linguistically. It is also important to remember that students at this level expect to be in a position to communicate both fluently and grammatically accurately.

FLUENCY

Fluency may be interpreted relative to different perspectives, depending on the emphasis assigned to tempo, or to the level of grammatical accuracy, or native-like pronunciation, or lexical range. A student's oral performance may be fluent in delivery (as in native-like tempo) but grammatically inaccurate, or grammatically accurate but lacking in fluent efficient delivery. Alternatively, it may be fluent but demonstrate a limited lexical range. Ideally, the student's oral performance should be both grammatically accurate and delivered efficiently with minimal pauses, hesitations and dysfluency markers. It is this idea of 'fluent but grammatically inaccurate' which this study examines. Typically, a student returning from the year abroad and completing the SES task, manifested fluency in delivery but this seemed to distract from grammatical, syntactic, lexical and phonetic deficiencies. It seems, that once the student perceives that he/she has achieved fluent delivery in spoken language (as in speedy, efficient) other features becomes less important to him/her (and often to the listener who then fails to correct). In some cases students demonstrate what Hammerly refers to as 'fluent ungrammaticality'.[13]

GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY

My attempt to establish the degree to which individual learners progressed, retrogressed, or retained errors on the level of grammatical accuracy, involved the error analysis in the following stages:

1. Selection of a corpus of language i.e. the SES 1, 2 and 3 recordings and the informal conversations to supplement SES 2 and 3.

2. The identification of errors - the task was initiated by asking native speakers to identify broad areas of performance weakness and give their overall, general and instinctive impressions of the students' performance.

3. Classification of errors - The broad areas chosen for analysis were:

    a) Morphology - Verb forms
        Tenses
        Number
        Gender
        Case

    b) Syntax - Word Order
        Sentence structure

    c) Lexis - Lexical range
        Compound nouns

    d) Phonology - Articulation
        Pronunciation
        Intonation

Communication strategies were also examined. The occurrence of observable communication strategies (e.g. literal translation, foreignizing, substitution, paraphrasing, approximation, word coinage, generalisation, message abandonment) employed by the student is however more frequent in the unstructured free conversation at SES 2 and 3 than during the structured SES interviews.[14]

Within the context of grammatical accuracy it is interesting to read student responses on the questionnaires. Both the pre-Year Abroad questionnaire and post-Year Abroad questionnaire pose questions which deal with student perceptions of German grammar. On the pre-Year Abroad questionnaire it emerges that students perceive grammar as **essential** but **boring**, certainly **not irrelevant** and **not over emphasised**, possibly **not emphasised enough**. On the post-Year Abroad questionnaire the trend emerged that students perceive grammar as **essential** and certainly **not irrelevant** and **not overemphasised**. The attitude towards grammar as something inherently boring has changed. The student comments on grammar indicate that they are coming to terms with the sociolingusitic necessity of grammar:

> *'If your grammar is bad this causes a bad impression'*
> *'The application of grammar rules can often help explain why things are expressed in a certain way in German'*
> *'To be able to say you are fluent in a language you cannot afford to be wrong. Grammar is boring but cannot be emphasised enough'*
> *'A good basis in grammar is essential before the Year Abroad because then you can concentrate on improving vocabulary and fluency'*
> *'I spent the Year making all sorts of grammar mistakes which will take a while to rectify. With the necessary preparation these could have been avoided'*
> *'It is not adequate to make oneself understood - you must be clear and accurate'*
> *'People are not interested if language is badly articulated - you're at a distinct disadvantage'*
> *'Grammar is a means to an end. Some grammar points I stumbled upon were very interesting. I'm happy with the level of emphasis'*

SELECTED RESEARCH RESULTS

a) Pre- Year Abroad and Post-Year Abroad Questionnaire - selected results.

Both questionnaires pose questions which elicit information in relation to self-ratings.

Prior to the Year Abroad, students were required to 'rate your overall German proficiency on a scale of 1 to 7 (1=limited knowledge, 7=almost native speaker)'

The predominant self-rating was between 4 and 5 on this scale of 1 - 7. This is significantly high for a non-native speaker, particularly an undergraduate. Given the fact that a rating of 7 was referred to as 'almost native speaker ability' in the question, the student self ratings demonstrate an overall tendency towards over-rating language skills, and a general inability to objectively assess personal linguistic competencies and inadequacies, or even query what Mother Tongue ability entails.

On completion of the Year Abroad the majority of the self ratings were between 5 and 6.5.

On the Post Year Abroad Questionnaire students were asked to assess their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills in German on the scale 1 - 7 across the period of learning from the end of post-primary (relevant for only 7 of the students) to the end of 1st year college and 2nd year college and also through from the beginning, middle and end of the Year Abroad programme. Whilst analysing the self-rating data it emerged that in spite of the descriptive guidelines (1=limited knowledge, 7=almost native speaker) each student had a preconceived idea of the rating 7 and measured the self-ratings against this. In the subsequent informal interviews students described the rating 7 as:

> *'not native speaker, a non-native speaker can never be like a NS. It's the highest rate that a NNS can achieve. I only realised during the Year Abroad that it's not possible to be a NS'*
> *'7 means that I understand everything said to me. It means being able to articulate, being able to say exactly what I want to say, as I would in English...being able to read anything. It's an unattainable goal for the NNS'*
> *'7 is relative to what's expected of us at each level 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year - it means perfection in the end'*
> *'7 is knowing all the nuances and subtleties, it means having a wide register and range'*
> *'It means absolute fluency like a NS'*

Similar to this research, self-ratings and oral tests were also used in the SAEP research. Similarly they noticed 'a tendency for students to overrate their FL proficiencies prior to entering the host country but that they tended to be more realistic at the end of the Period Abroad'.[15]

The ERASMUS study used retrospective self-ratings on a scale of 1 to 7 (very good to extremely limited). In relation to this Teichler (1991) states that 'the Study Abroad period proved to be effective in raising the level of Foreign language proficiency to a substantial extent. Speaking and writing remained somewhat less highly rated than listening and reading but improved to about the same extent. Speaking in an academic context remained more cautiously assessed than speaking outside the classroom ... we note a clear positive correlation between duration and the Foreign Language improvement, but there is no continual improvement ... growth does not continue beyond 7 months. Passive proficiency already reaches a high level after 4 months but a *ceiling* is reached for Speaking and Writing within 7 months'.[16]

In the American study, when the oral interview results and self appraisals were compared, it became evident that 'when students use self rating procedures to evaluate their verbal proficiency, they give themselves excessively high marks'. The assessors regarded the majority of the students to have skills not exceeding intermediate level prior to departure and it seems that student self evaluations of their own oral proficiency are exaggerated. The researchers propose an explanation for these inflated ratings of oral skills by suggesting that in the case of US students, they may have had little or no experience of living in a German speaking country and have no concept of what coping in the Foreign Language actually entails.[17]

The area of self assessment very obviously needs to be developed amongst students. Students require advice and instruction on how to assess their progress and abilities objectively and realistically. They need to be equipped with the necessary skills which would enable them be more self-reliant, resourceful and independent in their approaches to learning the FL. FLL is not just about learning the language but discovering how to approach learning most effectively. During the year abroad, the student is faced, often for the first time, with the need for *selborientiertes/ selbstgesteuertes/autonomes Lernen* outside the formal learning context.

b) The SES Interviews: selected results

Preliminary analysis of the SES interview recordings indicates that amongst the 15 student, several disparate groups emerge:

- *i)* *those who show a clear development, over the course of year abroad, in those language areas analysed, particularly morphology and syntax.*
- *ii)* *those students who show signs of inconsistent and erratic progress in those language areas analysed.*
- *iii)* *Those students who show no signs of improvement in the areas of morphology, but whose syntax improves.*
- *iv)* *Those students whose performance on SES 1, 2 and 3 shows no clear indication of progress in grammatical accuracy.*

The most apparent progress in most cases is on the level of oral confidence. Students show gradual and consistent development in the area of lexis; sentence structure becomes increasingly complex (or at least experimentation with structures), and in most cases students show signs of their ability to reflect upon, analyse their output and self-correct. The main preoccupation when analysing SES 1, 2 and 3 recordings was to establish which were the most frequently occurring grammatical errors in the students' performance. The performance of all 15 students was analysed and a classification of the errors indicated that the most predominant errors across the period from SES 1 to 2 to 3 were morphological, followed by syntactical, lexical and phonological. This error analysis has not conclusively revealed that there was no grammatical progress over the period of time, nor has it produced results which would conclude that there is systematic progress over the year abroad amongst all the participants. What is apparent is that in some cases, the students' use of communicative strategies is improved, and it is this area which is presently being explored within the context of the year abroad research project. Of particular interest is the students' extensive use of communication strategies in the free conversation, in contrast to their performance in the structured interviews which lacked such strategies - the free informal conversation eliciting more fluent and grammatically correct language speech.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

With the aid of the questionnaires and SES interviews (and also correspondence received from students outlining personal experiences) the project has involved both a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the year abroad in Germany. Based on student feedback relating to the programme, it is evident that the year abroad student requires greater practical linguistic guidance. This guidance is not simply in the form of practical information on college life in the host university, how to deal with bureaucracy etc.[18] While only a small scale study, it certainly indicates the need for colleges to design a flexible linguistic framework that could be used to derive maximum benefit by the student abroad, whilst at the same time allowing the student to meet the challenge of linguistic autonomy.

FOOTNOTES

1 See Harden, T. (1993:75-87).
Also Harden, T. & Walsh, R. (1993:34-54)

2 For further research based on Irish ERASMUS students see Batardiere, M.T. (1993); Laudet, C. (1993) *Teanga* 13.

3 Opper, S., Teichler, U. and Carlson, J. (1990)

4 Teichler, U. (1991:74)

5 Carlson, J., Burn, B., Useem, J. and Yachimowicz, D. (1990).

6 Brecht, R.D., Davidson, D. and Ginsberg, R. (1990,1991,1993)

7 Lennon, P. (1990)

8 De Keyser, R.M. (1991:115)

9 Freed, B.F. (1990:472)

10 Pfaff, C. and Portz, R. (1981)

11 Involving NSs in a preliminary error analysis is a procedure often adopted in error analysis and described in Politzer, R.L. (1978); McCretton, E., and Rider, N. (1993); Lennon, P. (1990); Hughes and Lascaratou (1982); Davies (1983). Each make the observation that NSs may in fact be more tolerant of certain errors than NNSs, especially NNS instructors. Ultimately it is the NS impression, perception and evaluation of a NNS's performance which is of greater relevance when it comes to judgement of the FL learner's inadequacies and competencies.

12 Grauberg, W. (1968); Duskova, L. (1969); LoCoco, V., (1975)

13 Hammerly, H. (1991:172)

14 see Tarone, E. (1982, 1983) and Labov, W. (1970) on interlanguage variability, task related factors influencing oral performance, and the elicitation of spontaneous speech versus careful style.

15 Opper, S., Teichler, U. and Carlson, J. (1990:99)

16 Teichler, U. (1991:74)

17 Carlson, J., Burn, B., Useem, J., Yachimowicz, D. (1990:48)

18 Any inadequacies on this level of information can be easily redressed. In fact several year abroad students admitted to the fact that any practical tips of this nature are largely ignored until faced with the problem in real life in Germany. A similar observation is made by Smelser (1985) vis a vis student reactions at orientation meetings. A certain balance needs to be maintained between providing too much and too little practical information. See also Goodwin & Nacht (1988).

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Syntactic Typology and 'Free Word Order' in Cushitic

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INTRODUCTION: CONFIGURATION AND SYNTACTIC TYPOLOGY[1]

Word order differences have traditionally been a focus of attention in the comparison of languages, and hence in the complementary programmes of linguistic typology and the search for linguistic universals. One topic of recent work has been the variability of head-complement orders. This is, of course, because traditional notions of heads and head-complement relations are centrally important to a number of current grammatical theories. If we take the Principle and Parameters theory, for example: a key development in this theory was Chomsky's attempts in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to develop the notion of *government* as a basic element of Universal Grammar, and thereby to link phrase structure grammar with the theory of movement rules. In recent proposals in this framework (see Chomsky n.d.), X' theory's configurational versions of notions like head, and complement, have become even more important to ideas about Universal Grammar (UG).

Within this theory, differences between languages are seen as the result of parametric variation: i.e. variations in the setting of certain values for a principle of UG. As is usual in this approach, head-complement relations are subject to a complicated interaction of principles, many of which have been argued to be subject to parametric variation. The Case Filter, the Empty Category Principle, the Theta-Criterion, and the Binding Principles, all have been argued to involve parametric variation. In this paper I would like to highlight the descriptive problems in assessing parametric variation in phrase structure by discussing verb-argument and adposition-argument relations in Omo-Tana Cushitic, concentrating on Somali. In particular I want to examine the applicability of a parameter *configurational* to these languages.

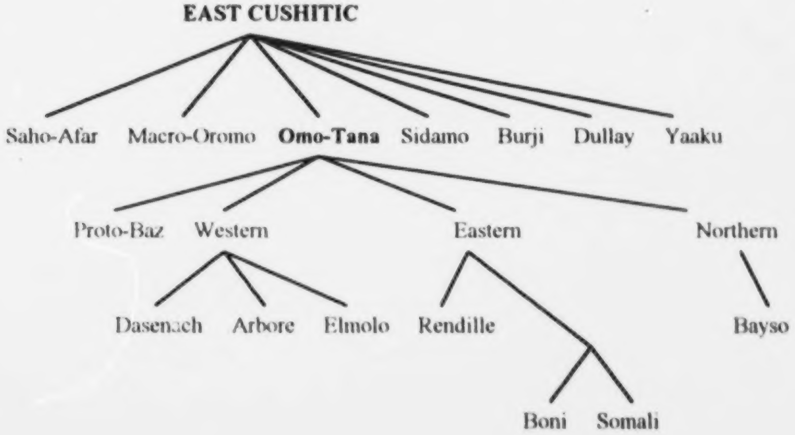
Some X-bar parametric variation concerns the order of head, complements and specifiers within the general X' schema of:

(1) XP --> {Specifier, X'}
(2) X' --> {X or X', (YP)}

The elements in { } are unordered and the ordering possibilities in (1) and (2) can be seen as parameters that can be set differently for different languages. I will be mentioning these parameters along the way. A more radical variation that has been identified is between languages to which this general schema applies, and those to which it does not: the so-called nonconfigurational languages. Following Hale's (1983) paper on Warlpiri, it has often been proposed that this too is a parameter, perhaps with a simple binary switch: languages are either **configurational** like

English, in which case the X' schema applies, and notions like syntactic government are relevant, or they are **nonconfigurational** like Warlpiri, in which case the X' schema does not apply, and sentences have a flat structure. In some sense, if such a parameter exists, it is higher than or precedes the parameters in (1) and (2). In this paper we look at this question of a configurational parameter, and attempt to flesh out some of the issues involved by trying to apply the notion to Omo-Tana languages, concentrating on Somali. As background, Figure (1) shows the position of Omo-Tana languages within Eastern Cushitic; Cushitic being one of the Afroasiatic subfamilies.

Figure 1 The OmoTana Subgroup within Eastern Cushitic



Traditionally Somali and related languages seem to provide problems for any configurational approach to syntagmatic relations like case assignment, agreement, etc. For example, at first sight, the notion of government, crucial to so many current theories, doesn't seem to have any structural correlation in the syntax. And, as we will see, the role of heads, in particular, seems problematical. In fact, as we'll see, these languages display the three features which Hale in his very influential (1983) paper described as being characteristic of non-configurational languages:

(3) *a.* *free word order*
b. *the use of syntactically discontinuous elements*
c. *extensive use of null anaphora.*

As mentioned earlier, Hale proposed that there is a parameter **configurational**, that divides languages with the features above from languages like English. The suggestion was that languages would be either configurational or nonconfigurational in their syntax. The language he was most concerned with then, the Australian language Warlpiri, was nonconfigurational, and, he proposed, had no syntactic categories between the word and the sentence. Sentences therefore would be assigned a completely flat structure, and notions like government, which in a

Principles and Parameters approach are based on X' theoretic notions, did not apply in the syntax.

Here I want to show, firstly, that Omo-Tana languages reveal these same features; this led Livnat (1984) for example, to suggest that Somali is a nonconfigurational language. But I will go on to argue that a two-value parameter of configurationality is too simple to reflect the facts. The aim will be to show something of Cushitic syntax, but also, I hope, to reveal the depth of analysis that is required to support decisions about parametric variation.

WORD ORDER

One very obvious fact about these languages is that they have a very free word order[2]. A sentence like (4a) below in Somali for example, can have the verb and its NP arguments in any order: (4b-e) show some of the possible permutations:

(4) a. *Cali wargèyskii wùu siiyey inántii*
Cali wargeys+kii waa+uu siiyey inan+tii
Ali newspaper+the CLASS+he gave girl+the
'Ali gave the newspaper to the girl.'
b. *Wargèyskii Cali wùu siiyey inántii.*
c. *Inántii Cali wùu siiyey wargèyskii.*
d. *Inántii wùu siiyey Cali wargèyskii.*
e. *Wargèyskii Cali inántii wùu siiyey.*

How are the semantic relations recoverable here? The first point is that NPs are inflected for case distinctions in a subject-absolutive-genitive-vocative case system. In most instances this is marked tonally, so that in the sentences in (4) above, *Cali* is marked as the subject, and 'the girl' and 'the money' as non-subject or absolutive, by their tone patterns. Secondly, subject NPs agree in number and gender with verbs, so that *sii* 'give' in these sentences is marked as having a masculine singular subject. Thirdly, as was shown in Sasse (1981) for Boni, and in Saeed (1984) for Somali, word order reflects pragmatic roles like focus and topic, so that the various word orders in (4) will be appropriate in different discourse situations. Indeed the only word order restriction on a predicator and its arguments in Somali, for example, is that focused NPs (of which there usually may only be one in a sentence) must occur to the left of the verb, where they are followed by a lexically empty focus word *baa* or *ayaa*, e.g.

(5) a. *Cali baa wargeyskii siiyey inantii*
Ali FOC newspaper+the gave girl+the
'Ali gave the newspaper to the girl, It was Ali who gave the newspaper to the girl'
b. **Wargeyskii inantii siiyey Cali baa.*
c. **Inantii siiyey Cali baa wargeyskii.*

The difference between (4) and (5) is that the NPs in the former are all known, whereas it would be likely that *Cali* in (5) would be new information. Focus is restricted to root clauses, so the word order in subordinate clauses is as free as in root clauses without focus.

So in processing terms, free verb-argument order is compensated for by morphological marking on NPs and verbs, and by pragmatic context. This still leaves sentences like (4), though, as a problem for approaches whose descriptive devices rely crucially on a notion of syntactic government. I would argue, however, that things are not as bad as they seem for such approaches. I will argue that the freedom of NP order is licensed by the presence of preverbal pronominal clitics, which as described in Saeed (1993b and in press) represent subject, object, and indirect arguments. Sentence (6) below is a characteristic example:

(6)	*Axmed*	*waxoogaa*	*wuu*	*igu*		*kaa*	*dhiibay*
	Axmed	*waxoogaa*	*waa+uu*	*i+u+ku*	pro	*kaa*	*dhiibay*
	Ahmed	a little	CLASS+he	me+to+for	it	you	gave

'Ahmed gave you a little (money) for me'

The grammar of these pre-verbal clitics is quite complicated (see for example: Andrzejewski 1960, Saeed 1993a). Basically, non-focus (and therefore usually known) arguments of the verb are represented by a coreferential clitic in a preverbal cluster. I have argued elsewhere (Saeed 1993b) that these are in fact clitics and not agreement affixes, though we might speculate that this is an intermediate stage in the development of a secondary (more comprehensive) system of agreement. Complexities arise, firstly, from the fact that considerable phonological coalescence occurs between them, as we can see from (6) above. Secondly, third person forms are zero, marked by **pro** in the morpheme analysis in (6). For readers who are dubious about empty categories: this is a genuine **gap in paradigm**, as we can see from the paradigms of second and third argument pronoun clitics in (7):

(7)	2nd Argument		3rd Argument	
	1s	*i*	*kay*	'me'
	2s	*ku*	*kaa*	'you(sg.)'
	3s	-	-	'him, her, it'
	1p	*na*	*keen*	'us'
	2p	*idin*	*kiin*	'you(pl.)'
	3p	-	-	'them'

If only one non-subject argument is required, the 2nd argument pronoun will be used; if there are two, both 2nd and 3rd argument pronouns will show up; so these are something like direct and indirect object pronoun clitics (but see Saeed 1993a: 173-180 for complications). Here what is important is that any gap in the argument structure of a verb will be interpreted as a third person argument, the choice dependent on context. See for example:

(8) a.	*Wuu*	*ku*	*arkay*
	waa+uu	*ku*	*arkay*
	CLASS+he	you	saw

'He saw you'

b. *Wuu arkay*
'He saw him/her/it/them'

Note that since both second and third argument clitics have third person gaps, the interpretation of gaps in the clitic cluster will fill out all the places in the argument structure of a three-place predicator, as in (9):

(9)	*Wuu*	*siiyey*
	waa+uu	*siiyey*
	CLASS+he	gave

'He gave him/her/it/them to him/her/it/them.'

Where, as we have said, the selection of the third person argument will depend on context. Thus the representation of (9) should probably be (10):

(10) *Wuu*$_1$ pro$_2$ pro$_3$ *siiyey*

Here the subscripts 1-3 identify arguments of the verb. Now, I would argue that it is these pronominal clitics that satisfy the argument structure of the verb, and thus license the word order freedom of NPs. There are a number of arguments for believing this and I'll present three: two grammatical and one pragmatic.

Firstly, we can observe that if NPs doubled by clitics are in fact in non-argument positions, then they form a parallel construction to topic structures. Topic NPs in Somali can occur before, or after the clause proper; they are known; and under the right discourse conditions, are deletable. This set of behaviours provides us with our first test: if the clitics are arguments of the verb, and the NPs not: then the latter should be optional and not the former. To see this we need to look at cases where the clitics are overt, i.e. non-third person arguments, and here we do indeed find that it is the NPs and not the clitics that are optional. The examples in (11-12) use the independent pronouns, which are syntactically and morphologically full nouns, as the second non-clitic argument. The (a) and (b) examples show a couple of instances of the positional freedom of these NPs (not all permutations shown). The (c) examples show that just the clitic pronoun satisfies the verb's argument structure, while the (d) examples show that just the full NP cannot:

(11)a.	*Askartii*	*adiga*	*way*	*ku*	*garteen*
	askar+tii	*adiga*	*waa+ay*	*ku*	*garteen*
	police+the	you	CLASS+they	you	recognised

'The police recognised you (sg.).'

b. *Askartii way ku garteen adiga*
'The police recognised you (sg.)'

c. *Askartii way ku garteen.*
'The police recognised you.'

d. **Askartii adiga way garteen*
'The police recognised you.'

(12) a.

Askartii	*annaga*	*way*	*na*	*garteen.*
police+the	us	CLASS+they	us	recognised

'The police recognised us.'

b. *Askartii way na garteen annaga.*
'The police recognised us.'

c. *Askartii way na garteen.*
'The police recognised us.'

d. **Askartii annaga way garteen*
'The police recognised us.'

The (d) examples are ungrammatical because of a lack of an object pronoun clitic: we can speculate that the gap in the verbal piece causes the default third person interpretation, which then clashes with the non-third person external NP. In other words, the (d) examples have one too many arguments for the verb's argument structure, something we could parallel in an English sentence like (13):

(13) *The police recognised him you.

For a second argument, we can turn to subordinate clauses: in particular, **that**-clauses. These begin with a complementiser in these languages as in English. In Somali it is *in* 'that', and we can therefore 'see' the limits of the sentence, so to speak. Our example (14) shows that the Somali two-place predicate *doon* 'want' subcategorises for a **that**-clause, underlined in the example:

(14)

Waxaan	*doonayaa*	*in Axmed tago*		
waxa+aan	*doonayaa*	*in*	*Axmed*	*tago*
what+I	want	that	Ahmed	go

'I want that Ahmed goes, I want Ahmed to go.'

We can derive evidence from the behaviour of matrix verbs and embedded sentences, like those in (14), that the free NPs are in non-argument positions and that the pronominal clitics are arguments. We are familiar in English with patterns like (15):

(15) a. I expect [$_{S'}$ that Jim will win]
b. I expect [$_{S}$ Jim to win]
c. *I expect Jim$_i$ [$_{S'}$ that he$_i$ will win]
d. *I expect Jim$_i$ [$_{S'}$ that _$_i$ will win]

Sentence (b) is a marked construction, traditionally associated with an S' (or CP) deletion analysis, since a higher verb does not govern a lower subject unless the maximal projection (S') dominating the lower clause is removed in some way (under the assumption that x governs y only if they share all maximal projections). Presumably, (c) is out because *expect* only theta-governs one complement argument so here we have one argument too many. And (d) is probably out for that and the extra reason that an empty element isn't properly governed by a co-indexed element in the right domain.

By comparison we can look again at our Somali verb *doon* 'want', where we find the pattern in (16):

(16)a. *Waxaan* *doonayaa* *[S' in* *Axmed* *tago]*
what+I want that Ahmed go
'I want that Axmed goes, I want Axmed to go.'

b. **Waxaan doonayaa Axmed*$_i$ [S' *in* _$_i$ *tago*]
c. **Waxaan doonayaa* [S' *in* _$_i$ *tago*] *Axmed*$_i$.
d. **Waxaan doonayaa* [S' *in* _ *tago*]

Sentences (16b) and (16c) are ungrammatical, like their English equivalents, because the NP *Axmed* is, in that position, one complement too many for the matrix verb, and because as in (16d) the lower sentence is missing a subject argument, or in generative approaches, has an improperly governed empty category. Now if we insert a clitic pronoun into the embedded sentence, we can see that the position of an NP like *Axmed* becomes immaterial:

(17)a. *Waxaan doonayaa inuu Axmed tago* .
b. *Waxaan doonayaa Axmed*$_i$ *inuu*$_i$ *tago*
c. *Waxaan doonayaa inuu*$_i$ *tago Axmed*$_i$.
'I want that Ahmed goes, I want Ahmed to go.'

d. *Waxaan doonayaa inuu tago.*
'I want that he goes, I want him to go.'

In these sentences we can see that the clitic is the relevant argument for the lower clause, and the NP *Axmed* is not an argument of either the matrix verb or the lower verb. We might expect that (17b) would be ungrammatical, like English sentence (15c) earlier because in it *doon* has two objects, though it only subcategorises for one, but in fact this sentence is fine because the NP *Axmed* is in fact a topic of the lower sentence, as shown in (18) and therefore not an argument of the matrix verb.

(18) *Waxaan doonayaa* [S' [TOPIC *Axmed* [S'*inuu tago*]]

Our third argument is a pragmatic one. Our analysis of the roles of these clitic pronouns and satellite NPs is supported by the behaviour of focused NP constructions. The clitic-NP doubling we have been looking at so far has involved nonfocus, known NPs. And, as we have seen, we have identified the satellite NPs as non-arguments. When we turn to focused NPs we find a different pattern. NPs focused by the focus particles *baa* and *ayaa* cannot occur with coreferential clitics, as (19) and (20) show:

(19)a. *Axmed* *baa* *ku* *gartay.*
Ahmed FOC you recognised
'**Ahmed** recognised you.'
b. **Axmed* *buu* *ku* *gartay.*
Axmed *baa+uu* *ku* *gartay.*
Ahmed FOC+he you recognised
'**Ahmed** recognised you'

(20)a. *Adiga* *ayay* *garteen.*
adi+ga *ayaa+ay* *garteen*
you FOC+they recognised
'They recognised **you**.'
b. **Adiga* *ayay* *ku* *garteen.*
adiga *ayaa+ay* *ku* *garteen*
you FOC+they you recognised
'They recognised **you**.'

Sentence (19b) is ungrammatical because a focused subject has a coreferential subject clitic pronoun in the verbal piece, (20b) is similarly ungrammatical because an object focused NP is doubled. In fact, we could rerun our earlier arguments and show that in these sentences the focused NP is an argument of the verb, and as well as not supporting a clitic double, cannot be deleted. This is pragmatically plausible, because clitic pronouns are lexically underspecified and can participate in argument structure only because of the recoverability of their referents. They typically represent arguments that are known or deictically accessible. Focused NPs, on the other hand, must be obligatorily present in the predication, as we would expect: NPs are given focus to be made prominent in the discourse, signalling amongst other things, new information and contrastive emphasis. They are thus maximally resistant to omission, reduction, or representation by clitics. We can describe the facts of (19) and (20) simply by stating that since the focused NPs have to be present as part of the predication, there is no available position in argument structure for clitic pronouns.

Now these focus constructions provide support for our connection between nonargument NPs and free word order because, as I mentioned earlier, these focused NPs, which are arguments of the predicator, do not display the same freedom of movement: they must occur to the left of the verb, as we saw in example (5) earlier. Since the other arguments, clitic pronouns, are strictly restricted to a preverbal position, this means that all arguments must occur to the left of the predicator in Omo-Tana, or in simple terms, Somali and related languages are verb final. If for brevity we just take the verb and its arguments, as described in Saeed (1993a: 216ff), clitic pronouns must occur in the fixed order of:

(21) SUBJ pro - 1st OBJ pro - 2nd OBJ pro - VERB

To go further than this would take us into as yet unresolved issues of word order in these languages. We can risk a simplification, though: if the nonargument satellite NPs are ignored, the order of elements in a basic root clause is:

(22) FOCUS NP - other arguments as clitics - V

DISCONTINUITY

This analysis also relates to a second non-configurational feature of Somali and other Omo-Tana languages: that certain constituents seem to be discontinuous. The clearest example of this concerns adpositions, which in these languages do not occur with the nominal but in the preverbal clitic cluster, e.g.

(23) a.	*Reerkii*	*way*	***ka***	*fogaadeen.*
	reer+kii	*waa+ay*	***ka***	*fogaadeen*
	hamlet+the	CLASS+they	from	went-far

'They went far from the nomadic hamlet.'

b. *Way **ka** fogaadeen reerkii.*

'They went far from the nomadic hamlet.'

In this Somali example, the adposition ***ka*** 'from', remains in a preverbal position regardless of the position of the NP is appears to govern. There are no conventional prepositions or postpositions in Somali, except for one preposition borrowed from Arabic *ilaa* 'until'. Similar preverbal adpositions are found in Boni, Rendille, Elmolo and Dasenach; some examples from Appleyard (1990) are given below:

(24) **Boni**

Us	*min*	***k'i***	*jiid*
he	house	from	came

'He came from the house'

Rendille

Usu	*'ule*	*wel*	***ka***	*jaha*
he	stick	child	with	hits

'He hits the child with a stick.'

Elmolo

Y'ere	*an'an*	***ka***	*nuure*
knife	I	with	cut

'I cut it with a knife.'

I have argued for Somali (Saeed 1993b) that these are not verbal derivational affixes but adpositional clitics, which participate freely in a number of syntactic structures: just like adpositions but occurring next to the verb rather than any nominal. They thus seem to raise the problem of a discontinuous PP constituent.

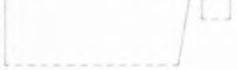
However, our analysis of the role of pronominal clitics suggests that these structures do not involve discontinuity. We cannot go into too much detail here but it seems that the adpositional clitics can, with one apparent exception, always be analysed as governing local pronominal clitics, which are then in the topic-like relation with external freely ordered NPs. Once again zero anaphora makes this behaviour easier to see with non-third person arguments:

(25) *Askartii* *adiga* *way* *kaa* *qaadeen.*
askar+tii *adiga* *waa+ay* pro *ku+ka* *qaadeen*
police+the you CLASS+they it you+from took
'The police took it away from you.

(26) **Askartii* *adiga* *way* *ka* *qaadeen.*
askar+tii *adiga* *waa+ay* pro *ka* *qaadeen*
police+the you CLASS+they it from took
'The police took it away from you.

Sentence (25) has the adpositional clitic governing an adjacent pronominal clitic *ku* 'you', which has a satellite NP the independent pronoun *adiga* 'you', in a nonargument position. Sentence (26) shows that omission of the clitic pronoun makes the structure ungrammatical: the external NP in not available to the adpositional clitic. We can therefore assign a structure something like (27) to sentence (25):

(27) *Askartii* *adiga*$_i$ [S' *way ku*$_i$ *ka qaadeen*]



Once again the exception is focused NPs where the focused NP must directly be governed by the adpositional clitic, e.g.

(28) *Adiga* *ayay* *ka* *qaadeen.*
adiga *ayaa+ay* pro *ka* *qaadeen*
you FOC+they it from took
'They took it from **you**.'

(29) **Adiga* *ayay* *kaa* *qaadeen.*
adiga *ayaa+ay* pro *ku+ka* *qaadeen*
you FOC+they it you+from took
'They took it from **you**.'

Sentence (29) where the focused NP is doubled by a clitic is ungrammatical, which means that the adposition must govern the focused NP directly. This leaves us with a much reduced version of our original apparent discontinuity: the adposition must govern the focused NP across the subject and direct object pronoun clitics, i.e.

(30)	[S'	[NP+FOC	*adiga ayaa*]	*ay*	pro	[ADP	*ka*]	*qaadeen*]
	[	[	you FOC]	they	it		from	took]

So it seems that these focused NPs are our last remaining case of discontinuity. We turn briefly to their syntax in the next section.

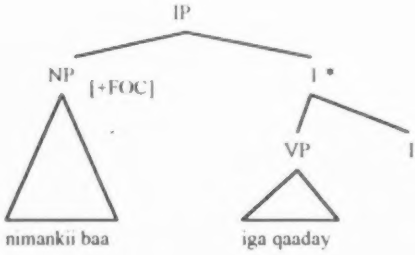
NP FOCUS CONSTRUCTIONS

As we have seen, contrary to the positional freedom of NPs in general, a focused NP must occur left of the verb and any clitic arguments. In Saeed (1984) I argued that the leftmost position of these elements was a result of a movement rule, *Focus Fronting*. In fact, whether we use a movement or a static analysis, the real issue is whether these phrases are inside the sentence or not. I argued above that they participate in the predication, whereas topic NPs do not. However, this leaves the question of whether they participate directly by being inside the S, or indirectly from an non-argument position, via a governed empty category. That is, whether (31) has the structure (32) or (33):

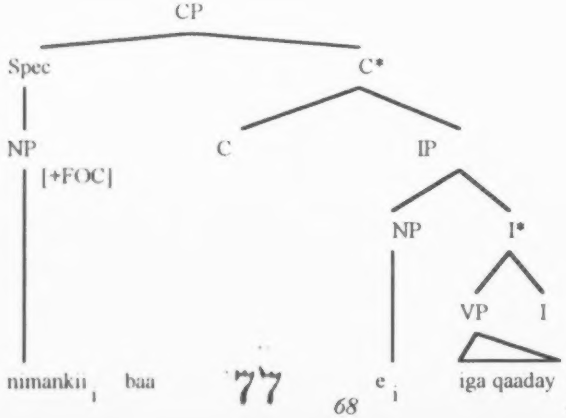
(31)	*Nimankii*	*baa*		*iga*	*qaaday.*
	niman+kii	*baa*	*pro*	*i+ka*	*qaaday*
	men+the	FOC	it	me+from	took

'**The men** took it from me.'

(32)



(33)



In both cases we could argue about the position of *baa*, but we will leave that an open question for now.

There is some evidence that (33), the analysis of the focused NP as external to the sentence, is correct, and this evidence comes from agreement. As has been described many times from Andrzejwski (1968) onwards, focused subject NPs show a defective, reduced agreement marking on the verb. Andrzejewski called this the restrictive paradigm, and it occurs with all verbs with focused NP subjects. Essentially, instead of a five way agreement, we get only three. This means for example that the verb *qaad* 'take' in (31) shows up with singular agreement even though it has a plural NP subject. Compare (34) below where there is no focused subject and the verb shows the usual plural agreement:

(34)	*Nimankii*	*way*		*iga*	*qaadeen.*
	niman+kii	*waa+ay*	pro	*i+ka*	*qaadeen*
	men+the	CLASS+they	it	me+from	took

'The men took it from me.'

This reduced agreement is by itself not a conclusive argument for a sentence external analysis of focused NPs, but as described in Saeed (1984), this behaviour is paralleled in one other place, relative clauses, where if the headword is the subject of the clause, the relative clause verb shows the same reduced agreement. See (35), which shows the usual restrictive relative clause marked by a gap rather than any relative pronoun, and which presumably has a structure like (36):

(35) a. *Nimankii iga qaaday*
b. **Nimankii iga qaadeen*
'the men who took it from me'

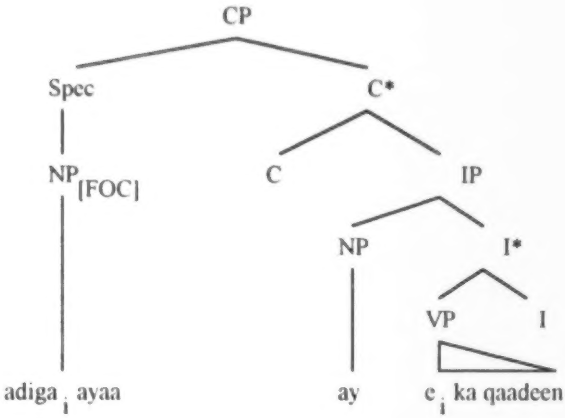
(36) [NP *nimankii* [CP e_i [IP e_i *iga qaaday/*qaadeen*]]]

It seems that in order to explain the relative clause behaviour we have to assume that the empty category in subject position, and coreferential with the head, is defective in triggering agreement. Whatever the details of this analysis, we can automatically predict the parallel behaviour with focused subjects if we assume a structure like (33) where the focused subject is outside the sentence, but represented in it by a coreferential empty category. In both cases the reduced agreement on the verb is associated with an empty category in subject position.

Note that this also solves our last problem with discontinuity. Focused NPs apparently governed by a discontinuous adpositional clitic will be analysed, in this independently motivated approach, as locally governed empty categories in the verbal piece.[3] That is, our earlier example (28), repeated here as (37a) will be analysed as (37b) with no discontinuity:

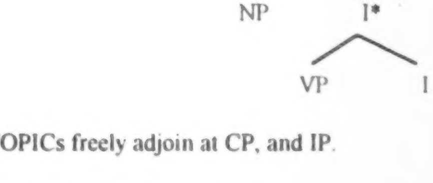
(37) a.	*Adiga*	*ayay*		*ka*	*qaadeen.*
	adiga	*ayaa+ay*	pro	*ka*	*qaadeen*
	you	FOC+they	it	from	took
	'They took it from **you**.'				

b.



So to sum up: if we follow fairly traditional Principles and Parameters assumptions about phrase structure, our discussion so far has led us to a characterisation of Somali clause structure, which far from our original notions of nonconfigurationality, have the typologically familiar structure in (38):

(38)



where TOPICs freely adjoin at CP, and IP.

To conclude this section, we can see that the superficial identification of these Omo-Tana languages as nonconfigurational on the basis of Hale's criteria - free word order, heavy use of zero anaphora, and discontinuity - breaks down under close examination into a much more complicated story. I have tried to demonstrate the role of preverbal clitics in licensing the extremely free order of NPs in the sentence, by identifying a difference between the argument and nonargument NPs. I have argued that clitic pronouns and full NPs are both arguments of the verb and are therefore, in a sense, in complementary distribution in argument structure. They can only be coreferential if the NP is an external topic in a non-argument position. The clearest evidence for the truth of this characterisation comes from focused NPs which, as essential parts of the predication, cannot be doubled by a clitic. Topic NPs, on the other hand, are in non-argument positions and must have a coreferential pronoun in the clause. It remains clear that discourse-based notion of focus and topic are very influential in the grammar, but it is also clear that clause boundaries, word order and directionality of government are crucially involved in Omo-Tana clause structure. In the next section we look briefly at one final issue in the role of government: the assignment of case.

CASE

We have seen, by looking at the role of clitic pronouns, that a simple two-valued parameter of **configuration** is not adequate for Somali. I have argued that these pronouns are referential arguments of the predicator, i.e. can act as subject, object etc., and we have seen that they are morphologically distinguished for case. However, our discussion so far raises another issue of typological importance: how can we characterise case marking in these languages? For our pronominal clitics this is not a problem: they occur adjacent to the verb or adposition. But we have another problem: the satellite or topic NPs are case marked. For example the NPs *Cali* in (4) or *Axmed* in (16) show up as subject marked wherever they appear. So it seems that the topic and the pronoun clitic are not only coreferential but they agree in case. The relationship between the topic and the pronoun shows no features of a movement rule: I will not give the details here because they are detailed in Saeed (1984) but basically there are no structural constraints on the relationship: no island constraints, subjacency etc.

Clearly, these topic NPs cannot be assigned case configurationally, and we will assume that they inherit case from the clitic pronoun in argument position. We can call this agreement **external** agreement, a term Fassi Fehri (1988: 140) uses to describe the matching between topics and pronouns in Arabic. Writing within a Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) approach, he proposes a two level coherence condition on functional structures, the level which copes with grammatical relations:

(39) a. an **internal** coherence condition; which binds all the grammatical functions within the predication; and

b. an **external** coherence condition; which binds discourse functions like TOPIC to a predication.

Fassi Fehri proposes that the (b)-type binding is necessarily anaphoric but does not necessarily involve case: our Somali sentences seem to be examples where externally bound elements do agree in case. If a separate level of functional structure is not available, then we will have, I think, to say that we have here an instance of semantic case assignment.

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The fact that NPs gain their case by coreference with a pronoun in argument position rather than configurationally might help explain the rather strange fact that complex NPs are only case marked once, at their righthand end, which means that NPs which are part of higher NPs do not necessarily get case marked, occurring in a default premodifier form, as shown in (40) below:

(40)a.	***nin***	*ma*	*sugayaa?*		
	man	Q	wait		

'Is a man waiting?'

b.	***Ninku***	*ma*	*sugayaa?*		
	nin+ku	*ma*	*sugayaa*		
	man+the	Q	wait		

'Is the man waiting?'

c.	*ninka*	*iyo*	***naagtu***	*ma*	*sugayaan?*
	man+the	and	woman+the	Q	wait

'Are the man and the woman waiting?'

d.	*Ninka*	*sugaya*	*miyaad*	*aragtay?*	
	nin+ka	*sugaya*	*ma+aad*	*aragtay*	
	man+the	wait	Q+you	saw	

'Did you see the man who is waiting?'

e.	*Ninka*	***sugayaa***	*wuu*	*ku*	*yaqaan.*
	nin+ka	*sugayaa*	*waa+uu*	*ku*	*yaqaan*
	man+the	wait	CLASS+he	you	knows

'The man who is waiting knows you.'

In (40) we show the position of subject marking on the NP in bold: whichever element occurs rightmost will bear the marking, even if it happens to be a verb as in (40e). The subject role of the maximal NP in its predication is marked, but there is no trickle down or percolation of features to any internal heads. Though this behaviour does not provide us with a strong argument for our analysis of semantic case, it does show that configuration does not seem to be important for case assignment in Somali.

CONCLUSION

From this brief investigation of free word order in Omo-Tana Cushitic, we have seen that a simple binary parameter *configurational* is in fact too simple and would inadequately reflect the syntactic complexities. Noun phrase order in these languages reflects pragmatic roles and we have seen something of the different behaviour of focus and topic NPs. I have argued that the syntactic freedom of non-focus NPs arises from their status as satellites to the predication, with the argument structure requirements of verbs and adpositions being locally satisfied by clitics. Focus NPs, however, do not display positional freedom: they must occur as specifiers of C*, binding an empty argument in the clause. Our investigations have shown that, though these languages seem to display extreme freedom of argument order, category boundaries, direction, and government are important in their syntactic description. We have also seen one dependency phenomenon, case, where these languages do in part require a non-configurational explanation.

FOOTNOTES

[1] This article is a condensed version of a talk given to the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics in November 1992. I would like to thank IRAAL for their kind invitation and the audience at the talk for their comments and suggestions. I am grateful to Abdillahi Dirir Hersi and Abdirahman Afey for discussing the Somali data with me. The following abbreviations are used in the paper: FOC, CLASS, NEG, ADP = focus particle, classifier, negative word, adposition; 1,2,3 = first, second, third persons; sg, pl = singular, plural; m, f = masculine, feminine; pro = non-overt clitic pronoun; e = empty argument bound by focus NP; + = morpheme boundary. Tones (not marked in Omo-Tana orthographies) are only marked here when relevant to the discussion: á = high tone, àa = (high) falling tone, a (unmarked) = low tone.

[2] We concentrate here on the relationship between verbs and their arguments; and later on, between adpositions and their arguments..

[3] It might be useful here to contrast the behaviour of this empty category, **e**, involved in focus constructions and relative clauses, with the non-overt object **pro**. The latter is referentially free, while there are syntactic constructions which block the interpretation of the former. For example, clauses with the complementiser *in* 'that' form barriers to government which cause some relative clauses to be ungrammatical. Compare for example:

(1) $[_{NP}$ *naagtu*$_i$ $[_S$ e$_i$ *ku* *aragtay*$]]$
woman+the [e] you saw
'the woman who saw you'

(2) *$[_{NP}$ *naagtu*$_i$ $[_S$ *aad* *sheegtay* $[_{CP}$ *in* e$_i$ *ku* *aragtay*$]]]$
woman+the you said that [e] you saw
'the woman who you said that saw you'

In (1) we see the normal gap strategy for relative clauses in Somali; in (2) the referential link between the head NP *naagtu* 'the woman' and the empty category **e** is blocked by the *in*-clause. To convey this meaning speakers use an alternative relativisation strategy using a clitic pronoun instead of a gap, e.g.

(3) $[_{NP}$ *naagtu*$_i$ $[_S$ *aad* *sheegtay* $[_{CP}$ in *ay*$_i$ *ku* *aragtay*$]]]$
woman+the you said that she you saw
'the woman who you said that she saw you'

This clear distinction between the two non-overt categories **pro** and **e** can be seen if we parallel (2) with an embedded relative clause with an empty object as in (4):

(4) $[_{NP}$ *naagtu*$_i$ $[_S$ *aad* *sheegtay* $[_{CP}$ *in* aad **pro**$_i$ *aragtay*$]]]$
woman+the you said that you [pro] saw
'the woman who you said that you saw'

Sentence (4) with the non-overt object **pro** inside the *in*-clause is grammatical; sentence (2) with the empty category **e** inside it is not. Of course in terms of Binding Theory we can reflect this by saying that **pro** is only subject to Principle B of the theory.

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L2 Motivation as a Qualitative Construct

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ABSTRACT

This paper begins by reviewing the social-psychological tradition of L2 motivational research, typified by a methodology reflecting a particular concept of motivation in terms of quantifiable components. The paper then considers how motivation might be defined in more qualitative terms, by drawing on relevant research in educational psychology. It reports on work in progress to investigate qualitative aspects of L2 motivation as reflected in students' thought processes. Open-ended and semi-structured interview techniques were employed to elicit perceptions of motivational processes and experiences from a sample of twenty L2 learners. The range of perspectives identified suggests that even within a small subject sample qualitative motivational differences exist which are not easily accommodated within the traditional theoretical framework. The introspective findings also draw attention to the potential role of effective motivational thinking in the L2 learning process.

INTRODUCTION

In their 1991 *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 10-24) discuss the attributes of quantitative and qualitative types of methodologies in SLA research. Studies of the former kind aim to predict or to verify, and typically involve the use of objective measurement instruments to generate quantifiable data for statistical analysis. Qualitative studies aim to uncover or to explore, and typically involve the use of observational or introspective techniques to generate descriptive data for content analysis.

As Larsen-Freeman and Long suggest, the two types of methodologies should not be regarded as being mutually exclusive, since a descriptive qualitative approach is nevertheless likely to entail some degree of coding and quantification of data. The difference is rather one of scale, focus and purpose. Larsen-Freeman and Long add that the two kinds of methodologies should accordingly be viewed as complementary rather than competing paradigms, and that SLA research might usefully benefit from a combination of both approaches to the major theoretical issues.

In this respect, the present paper wishes to draw attention to the potential value of complementing existing quantitative research approaches to the study of language learning motivation, with a more descriptive qualitative approach.

The paper begins by reviewing the social-psychological theoretical tradition of L2 motivational research, which is typified by a methodology reflecting a particular concept of L2 motivation in terms of quantifiable components. The paper then considers how L2 motivation might be defined in more qualitative terms, by drawing on recent trends in relevant research in educational psychology. Finally, it concludes with a brief report on work in progress in the TCD Modern Languages Research Project (Singleton 1990) to explore qualitative features of L2 motivation.

THE SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH TRADITION

Within the social-psychological research tradition which has so dominated theory and research on L2 motivation since the early 1960s, the study of L2 motivation was in effect prompted by a search for what, apart from ability or aptitude, might possibly cause successful second language acquisition. Since language is rooted in a social context, it was believed that attitudes toward target language speakers and their culture might be of importance, influencing a person's language learning **motivation**. Motivation would also be determined by the kind of orientation or language learning purposes envisaged - i.e., **instrumental**, reflecting a utilitarian interest for vocational purposes, etc., or **integrative**, reflecting a desire for friendship and possible integration with the target language community. It was hypothesised that an integrative motivation would be more effective in sustaining the long-term effort required to master a second language (Gardner and Lambert 1972).

Such were the **working hypotheses** which formed the foundation of social-psychological theories of L2 motivation, and which subsequently generated a host of research studies to test and verify the basic predictions. Differences in cultural setting and linguistic context have led to some variation in results obtained. The early studies carried out by Gardner and Lambert in Canada and North America provided promising supportive evidence. On the other hand, a study of Filipino students learning English found evidence in favour of **instrumental** rather than integrative motivation in promoting L2 achievement (Gardner and Lambert 1972). This finding was mirrored in a study of high-school students in India described by Lukmani (1972). On the whole, nevertheless, the research has borne out the original predictions (Gardner 1985).

Within the social-psychological framework, however, L2 motivational theory has of course been subject to discussion and adaptation by different researchers. Schumann for example incorporates the integrative/instrumental distinction into his theory of affective factors influencing social-psychological distance and hence language learning success (Schumann 1978). Clément develops L2 motivational theory to take account of differences between unicultural and multicultural contexts. The interplay of integrativeness and fear of assimilation constitutes the primary motivational process. In multicultural contexts where there is opportunity for interaction with target language speakers, this primary process is hypothesised to determine the frequency and quality of such interaction. The resulting level of self-confidence or anxiety gained constitutes the secondary motivational process which shapes motivation and ultimately L2 achievement (Clément and Kruidenier 1985). Relationships between learner and target language community are also a central aspect of the theory as developed by Genesee, Rogers and Holobow. They integrate into the Gardner model a further motivational variable - namely, the perceived motivational support which the learner expects to get from the target language community (Genesee *et al.* 1983).

METHODOLOGY: THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

Within the general theoretical framework described above, motivation is thus conceptualised as an affective variable implicated in second language learning achievement. In terms of research methodology, the purpose of testing and verifying the contributory role of motivation in SLA has necessitated the expression of L2 motivation as a mathematical index, numerically compatible in correlational and multivariate statistical analyses with other variable indices (e.g., measures of aptitude, achievement, persistence in learning, etc.). Operationally, this motivational index is obtained by totalling the subject's response scores on questionnaire items designed and worded to assess aspects of motivation which are to some extent **measurable or quantifiable**, at least in relative terms: e.g., how much effort is put into doing French homework (some effort, work very carefully, just skim over); how often voluntary contact with French-speaking neighbours might be sought (never, sometimes, as much as possible); or agreement-disagreement on a 7-point scale to statements expressing feelings such as 'Learning French is a waste of time' (Gardner 1985: 179-182). Simple addition of the subject's scores on all the item-scales provides an index of motivation - the higher the scores, the higher the level of motivation.

Other researchers too have generally adapted the methodology developed by Gardner and his associates. Clément and Kruidenier use Gardner's item-scales to measure levels of Integrativeness and Motivation, and develop similar scales to measure the strength of other variables such as Fear of Assimilation and Contact with Anglophones (Clément and Kruidenier 1985: 28-29). Genesee, Rogers and Holobow ask students to rate the importance of each of 46 motivational statements by marking a 9cm-long rating scale defined at opposite ends as 'not at all important' and 'very important' (Genesee *et al.* 1983: 212-213).

LIMITATIONS OF L2 MOTIVATION AS A QUANTITATIVE CONSTRUCT

From a conceptual point of view, one of the limitations of this type of quantitative research approach is that the motivational construct itself is defined solely in terms of theoretical components which are quantifiable. Specifically, Gardner identifies these components as desire to learn the language, motivational intensity or effort, and attitudes toward learning the language (Gardner 1985: 50-56). These are the three theoretical components which are then operationalised in the measurement instrument in terms of scales of multiple choice and Likert-type items assessing how strong the desire to learn is, how much effort is demonstrated, and how positive the attitudes are. Individual differences in motivation are thus confined to differences in **degree** rather than in **quality**.

Of course, qualitative differences between **integrative** and **instrumental** types of motivational orientation are a central aspect of the theory, since learners who are integratively motivated are hypothesised to be more effective and successful in the long run (Gardner and Lambert 1972: 15). However, in operational terms, these qualitative differences are reduced too to differences in motivational degree rather than quality. In the multiple choice orientation index in the measurement instrument used by Gardner and his associates, subjects are invited to select one of four reasons for learning the L2 - two integrative reasons scoring 2 points each, and two instrumental reasons scoring only 1 point each. Qualitative differences between learners are thus expressed in quantitative terms, with the underlying assumption that instrumentally oriented learners are simply less strongly oriented than those integratively oriented.

ADVOCATING A MORE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

In short, studies of L2 motivation have focused in varying ways on differences in degree of motivation among learners, and on how such differences might be related to particular language learning outcomes. This theoretical focus has been reflected in the type of methodology developed to measure the strength of specific motivational components. Crookes and Schmidt comment in December 1991 that research interest in the topic of L2 motivation is now receding (1991: 469), despite the legacy of three decades of theory and investigation. It may be that, although few would now doubt the contributory role of motivation in L2 learning, it is not really clear whether **levels** of motivation may in themselves explain much more that is useful.

This is not to say of course that there are no motivation-related issues in SLA research which warrant further study. If we return for a moment to the opening discussion, it seems that what is needed to complement the existing quantitative research framework is a different kind of research approach and purpose. One such focus might be on exploring the types of motivational differences which operate both across sets of L2 learners, and also over the learning time span within an individual learner's experience, rather than on measuring motivational levels and their collective impact on L2 achievement.

In this connection, it seems useful to draw on recent developments in educational psychology concerning qualitative approaches to the study of learning motivation. Ames (1986) discusses how effective learning motivation may be qualitatively defined in terms of **positive and meaningful thinking** on the part of students, rather than in terms of demonstrated effort, activity or time spent on a task. Motivation is viewed in terms of cognitive-mediational processes, whereby how the student thinks and how he or she interprets relevant learning experience will determine the choice, level and quality of interaction in the learning context. Students for example may evaluate learning goals differently, some seeing learning as a means of gaining ability and others of demonstrating ability. Similarly, they may evaluate their performances in different ways, some deriving satisfaction from doing better than fellow-students, and others from experiencing growth in knowledge or understanding. Differing beliefs, expectations, priorities and attributions are likely to affect and shape motivation in different ways, although behavioural outcomes of effort expended or time devoted may not always reflect such differences.

As Ames points out, the focus on the qualitative content of students' thoughts integrates the study of motivation with research in both learner autonomy and learning strategies (Ames 1986: 237-238). The internal perspective on student thought processes in interpreting experience and shaping involvement in learning seems closely linked to the self-regulating perspective of the autonomous learner involved in his or her own learning.

As for learning strategies, there are already indications in recent SLA theory and research that their use may have a strong motivational basis - i.e., students with greater motivation are likely to develop and use a greater number or more complex range of learning strategies (Oxford and Nyikos 1989, Tumposky 1991, Gardner and MacIntyre 1992). However, the suggestion from the present discussion is that the emphasis on cognitive-mediational processes allows for the possibility that these mental processes may be enhanced and optimised, giving rise to the concepts of **self-motivation** and **motivational skills or strategies** (Ames 1986, McCombs 1988).

The pedagogic implications of this possibility are self-evident. From the research literature so far, it would seem that training in effective motivational thinking revolves in particular around the preservation of a positive self-image and sense of competence. This is largely achieved through selective attribution processes, whereby successful performance is ascribed to personal ability, but failure or poor performance to external or temporary causes, such as bad luck, lack of effort or poor work strategies, thereby protecting self-perceptions of competence (Weiner 1984, Hewstone 1989, Kelley 1983, McCombs 1988). Self-motivational skills may also involve the setting of realistic short-term goals. These will mobilise and sustain motivation by helping to develop self-perceptions of progress and competence as the goals are attained, and by providing a sense of personal control and involvement in structuring one's learning (Bandura and Schunk 1981, Ames 1986, McCombs 1988).

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF L2 MOTIVATION

It is in the context of this theoretical focus on student thought processes that the present research study of language learning motivation is being conducted, in an attempt to broaden the concept of L2 motivation beyond more readily quantifiable aspects such as strength of affect or amount of activity and effort demonstrated.

For the initial stage of data elicitation in December 1991, an open-ended interview technique was adopted to suit the exploratory research purpose. Twenty undergraduate students taking French as one of their subjects of study were asked individually by the present researcher to explain their motivation for learning French. The students were not primed with specific motivational concepts such as goals, achievement, rewards, etc., but simply asked to describe what they felt was particularly motivating them.

The second stage of data elicitation has just been completed, a little over a year after the initial interviews. A semi-structured interview technique was adopted on this occasion to follow up certain specific lines of investigation arising from analysis of the original data. The interview questions were however couched in open-ended terms, allowing subjects free rein in their responses to describe motivational experiences and processes from their point of view.

RESEARCH FINDINGS: QUALITATIVE MOTIVATIONAL DIFFERENCES

The range of motivational variables identified by this small sample of students seems extensive enough to indicate that qualitative motivational differences do exist, and that these are rather more complex and wide-ranging than mere distinctions between instrumental and integrative types of goals, on which traditional SLA motivational theory rests.

Based on a content analysis of each of the 20 tape-recorded first stage interviews, a total of 63 motivational variables were identified and coded. While some motivational variables were mentioned by numbers of students, on average the frequency with which variables were repeated across the subject sample was only 4.3, with as many as 27 of the 63 variables identified by only one or two of the students. These less common variables include motivational elements such as a desire to overcome the frustration of present communicative limitations, a desire not to forget French, a sense of waste if French studies were discontinued, the pressure of other people's expectations of continued success, or an academic interest in certain linguistic aspects of the French language. For the purposes of further analysis and the tracing of underlying trends, nevertheless, variables sharing broadly common attributes were classified together, resulting in the emergence of the following descriptive categories:

- *Academic Interest;*
- *L2 learning enjoyment;*
- *Past L2 learning experience;*
- *Personal satisfaction;*
- *Desired levels of L2 competence;*
- *Personal goals;*
- *Feelings about French-speaking countries/people;*
- *External/course-related pressures and incentives.*

The most frequently cited variables were motivation attributed to earlier positive experience of being in France or a francophone country, mentioned by 15 of the 20 students, and the motivational desire to spend a few years living in France, mentioned by 13 students. These contrasting temporal dimensions (motivation deriving from past experience and motivation ascribed to future goals) seem to be mirrored in a range of qualitative differences in the students' motivational perceptions. While some emphasise the incentive of particular goals and aspirations toward certain levels of L2 fluency, many others seem to account for their principal motivational impetus in terms of positive **past and present** learning and L2-related experience.

The implications for SLA research on motivation are that attempts to classify learners as simply instrumentally or integratively oriented on the snapshot basis of responses to a closed set of items may overlook subtle differences in how individual learners prioritise future goals as such in their overall motivational rationales. Some learners may become classified as instrumentally motivated, yet in fact have little clear perception of what their specific goals might be, or attribute only minor motivational importance to such goals.

RESEARCH FINDINGS: EFFECTIVE MOTIVATIONAL THINKING

With regard to indications of effective motivational thinking on the part of students, the following findings seem suggestive enough to merit further investigation.

17 of the 20 students attribute their motivation in part to a positive self-perception of ability or success in language learning. Each of the 17 ascribes his or her motivation to one or more of the following factors:

- *good French language ability;*
- *ease of learning French;*
- *facility for language learning;*
- *good academic record in French.*

Of the 3 students who do not express positive self-evaluations in the learning context, one student identifies instead the motivational value of experiencing a sense of achievement in communicative success, and pride in possessing French language skills, especially when in the company of monolingual friends.

Such indications of the general pervasiveness of a positive L2-related self-concept lends support to the notion of a **subjective competence basis** for effective motivational thinking, as discussed earlier. The findings also suggest that a qualitative approach may yet help to shed light on questions of the direction of causality regarding motivation and achievement, which are a central concern of quantitative motivational research. Cause and effect are here not determined by measuring and manipulating variables and making reasoned inferences, but are simply identified by the individual's own perceptions of relevant experience and motivational processes (cf. Bailey 1983). Students who experience success or positive rewards attribute their motivation in part to that experience, and to the expectation of its continued renewal. The principal pedagogic implication of course is the need to provide learners with successful and positive experiences in the learning process itself and in the use of the L2.

There are also some indications from the research data that students may indeed possess certain strategies for handling and optimising their motivation, especially in the face of temporary motivational setbacks, disappointing performance or heavy workloads. These include reminding oneself of one's incentives (e.g., consciously thinking about the reward of getting to France the following year as an incentive to work hard and pass one's exams this year), or positive self-talk (e.g., reassuring oneself after a poor performance that a high level of achievement cannot always be maintained and that doing well is not the only thing in life). Also reported by a number of students as a strategy for restoring motivation after temporary setbacks is deliberate indulgence in a favourite French language activity removed from the formal learning context, such as watching a French film or reading a French magazine.

CONCLUSION

At this interim stage of the research investigation, the findings reported have necessarily been merely descriptive and suggestive, and no firm conclusions can be drawn. Nevertheless it is hoped that the study may indicate the potential value of exploring L2 motivation as a qualitative construct through its focus on the role of motivational thought processes in L2 learning. A range of motivational perspectives seems to emerge, despite the small size of the subject sample, and the unity of the learning context and language of study. Other investigations might fruitfully extend this line of inquiry by examining different learning and cultural contexts, languages of study, age-groups and proficiency levels. The generally positive impact of high levels of motivation on levels of L2 achievement has been extensively documented in the existing quantitative research tradition. A more introspective approach to the perceived dynamic interplay between learning experience and individual motivational thought processes may offer a better understanding of how these high levels of motivation might be effectively promoted and sustained.

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The Introduction of Irish as a Target Language to the Eurotra Machine Translation System

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ABSTRACT

The Eurotra Machine Translation system was designed to perform automatic translation between all nine official working languages of the European Communities and thus to cover a total of 72 language pairs. This paper presents the results of an experiment in which a 73rd language pair was introduced to the system: English-Irish. First the basic system architecture of Eurotra is discussed as well as the formalism and linguistic specifications that underlie its operation. The feasibility of adding Irish as a target language is then investigated along two axes - those of syntactic and semantic representations. While Irish was found to be generally amenable to Eurotra treatment, instances of undesirable complex transfer did arise between English and Irish. Such problems, as well as difficulties in deriving Irish surface forms from putative interlingual encodings for the phenomena of tense, aspect and diathesis in particular, are elucidated upon in the paper.[1]

INTRODUCTION

The Eurotra Machine Translation (MT) system is a transfer-based system designed to translate between all 9 official working languages of the European Community. Its history and linguistic and formal specifications have been described in detail elsewhere (see, for example, Hutchins and Somers 1992: 239-258 and Copeland *et al.* 1991a and 1991b respectively). Many of these specifications will be elaborated upon below, although the present article makes no claim to provide an exhaustive description of the same. Suffice it to say for the present that Eurotra displays the typical architecture of a transfer-based MT system: translation takes place in three major stages: **analysis**, **transfer** and **generation**. Analysis of an input text ultimately yields a deep representation of this, the source language (SL) text. In Eurotra terminology, such a deep representation is known as an **Interface Structure (IS)**. In transfer, a source language IS is mapped onto a target language IS, from which the target text is then generated. As mentioned already, Eurotra had to deal with 9 languages, making a total of 72 language pairs (or n(n-1)). This meant that if the mapping from an SL IS to a TL IS were not kept as simple as possible, then the task involved in transfer between all language pairs (in either direction) would take on gargantuan proportions. Keeping transfer simple, however, meant defining a set of common principles for what form ISs should take. For this reason, the basic shape of the IS for each language's analysis and generation components was prescribed centrally in Eurotra. Another consequence of the relatively large number of languages involved was the necessity for strictly monolingual analysis and generation modules. In other words, given that each SL had to be translated into no fewer that eight different TLs, it was not feasible to allow the characteristics of any particular TL to influence the analysis of that SL. In Van Eynde's terminology (1993: 7), neither *anticipation* nor, for that matter, its mirror image *readjustment* was permissible. In short, analysis was carried out monolingually and in a manner decided upon by each particular language group - although this task was generally broken down into the same general subtasks across all nine languages - on one condition: the representation of the syntax and semantics of the input text ultimately yielded by analysis should conform to the centrally prescribed description of an Interface Structure.

Although the intermediate levels of analysis, typically corresponding to analysis of morphological, constituent and relational structures, in that order, provide much material worthy of discussion, it is the final level of analysis, or IS, which is crucial when one comes to add another language to the system. Thus when, in the course of the current investigation, the author came to introduce the Irish language to the Eurotra system, the feasibility of such a project was tested by first establishing whether or not Eurotra's structural interlingua - a 'euroversal' *normalised* (deep) representation for sometimes highly divergent surface sentences - could accommodate this language for which it was never intended. Even more telling would be the investigation of elements of sentence meaning that do not form part of the latter's predicative core. Such elements as tense and aspect, modality, negation, etc., are external to the predicative core and are related to it as a whole. These issues were tackled by *abstracting* away from language-specific forms to a set of logically derived (in the case of temporal meaning in any case) extralingual features. By introducing another, genealogically slightly different, language to the system, it was possible to ascertain whether Eurotra's putative interlingual features were what they claimed to be. The remainder of this paper looks at the introduction of Irish to Eurotra along these two axes. Firstly the applicability to Irish of Eurotra's normalised representations of the predicative cores of sentences is investigated, then the suitability of the more interlingual features is analysed with particular emphasis on the phenomena of diathesis and tense and aspect. The conclusions drawn were arrived at on the basis of a small-scale implementation using (1) a first definition of an Interface Structure for Irish and (2) an English-Irish transfer module, both written specifically for this experiment and described in more detail in Kenny (1992).

REPRESENTING THE PREDICATIVE CORE OF SENTENCES - DEPENDENCY STRUCTURES

Eurotra's IS representations are essentially **dependency structures** derived through a process of **canonicalisation**. Allegranza *et al.* (1991: 34) explain how the initial steps of canonicalisation are achieved:

First of all, the propositional core is extracted from a variety of sentential structures, and differences such as that between interrogative and declarative, or various types of mood, are expressed by attribute-value (a/v) pairs at the sentence level.

Secondly, displaced elements ... are put back into their 'normal' dependency position. [...]

Thirdly, a number of 'alternations' such as active-passive or dative shift in English are neutralised.

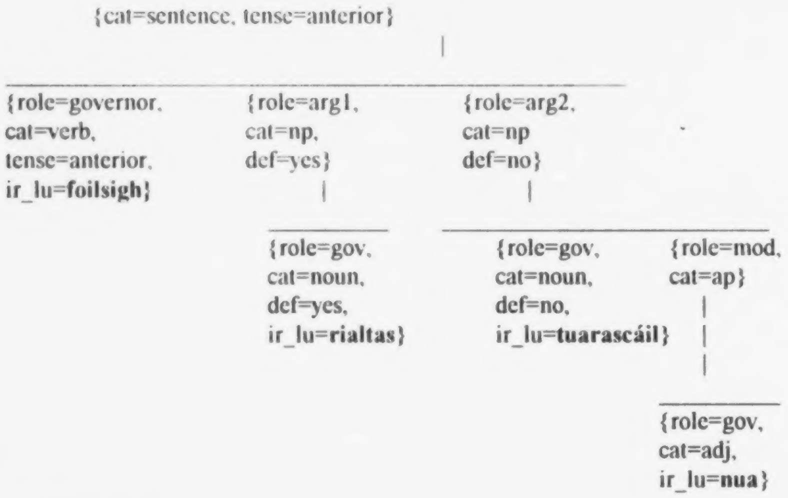
The elimination of empty elements such as dummy subjects, strongly bound prepositions, etc., and language-specific morphosyntactic information like articles is also a vital part of this process. The resultant predicative core of a sentence is then retyped as a dependency structure made up of a **governor** followed by dependants of two types: **arguments** and **modifiers**. The order relations are fixed: governors precede arguments, which in turn always precede modifiers. Each phrasal category has a governor, normally identifiable as the **head** (a lexical category) of the phrase. At main sentence level however, only verbs may be governors, a restriction which, it will be shown, has implications for copular constructions in particular. The argument structure of sentences and phrasal categories at IS is determined by a frame theory which specifies the maximum number of slots a particular predicate makes available for possible occupation by arguments. An upper limit of four arguments is prescribed. There is also an indexation system for all arguments. They are defined in terms of deep syntactic roles and their relative order is fixed at IS by the **linear precedence constraint** summarised below:

gov
<< arg1 (deep subject)
<< arg2 (deep object)
<< functionally-typed arguments, e.g., arg_AS (attribute of subject)
<< arg adjuncts (valency-bound arguments usually expressed via weakly-bound prepositions)
<< modifiers
<< transconstructionals

Where the symbol << indicates linear precedence.
Thus the fairly straightforward Irish sentence:

> *D'fhoilsigh an rialtas tuarascáil nua.*
> The government published a new report.

Would be represented by the following dependency structure (where morphosyntactic information relating to, for example, articles and tense, has been encoded by *featurization*):


{cat=sentence, tense=anterior}
{role=governor, cat=verb, tense=anterior, ir_lu=**foilsigh**}
{role=arg1, cat=np, def=yes}
{role=arg2, cat=np def=no}
{role=gov, cat=noun, def=yes, ir_lu=**rialtas**}
{role=gov, cat=noun, def=no, ir_lu=**tuarascáil**}
{role=mod, cat=ap}
{role=gov, cat=adj, ir_lu=**nua**}

This dependency structure shows clearly some characteristics of the Eurotra framework. The latter is a unification-based grammar formalism which handles structured feature-based linguistic objects. Nodes in trees are thus represented by feature bundles, sets of attribute/value pairs enclosed in brackets ('{' and '}'), as in the above diagram. Note, though, that the above structure will not survive in the translation process from SL to TL unless it can be confirmed as 'legal' by the **generator** at the specific level of analysis. Generators are basically a set of rules which provide templates for sentence and phrasal structures that are permissible at a given level. Between successive generators, a mechanism known as a **translator** comes into play. Translators map structures at one level onto putative structures at the next level. If the target generator deems such a structure to be legal, the latter survives; if not, it is abandoned. The task at hand can therefore be seen as the creation of a generator to specify legal interface structures (ISs) in Irish, and of a translator to map English (for which an IS generator already existed) ISs onto these Irish ISs. In such a mapping, both the structure (the tree) and the features that make up terminal nodes (the leaves) must be transferred. The former constitutes structural transfer; the latter, lexical transfer. Both structural and lexical transfer can be simple or complex. Naturally, if transfer between languages is to be facilitated, simple transfer is desirable, while complex transfer is not. Complex transfer would ensue where it is not possible to represent the predicative cores of translationally equivalent sentences in the same way. Instances of such complex transfer in English-Irish translation are the subject of the next section, but first we will look at an example of how transfer can be kept simple, despite a radical difference in the way in which two languages can attach linguistic labels to the same reality, exemplified by the existence of two Irish verbs 'to be'.

KEEPING TRANSFER SIMPLE - AN EXAMPLE

It is well known that the English verb 'to be' can be translated by: the Irish copula *is*, in cases where the predicate (or 'attribute of subject' below) expresses 'essential or inherent qualities' (Stenson 1981: 94) and thus commonly takes the form of an

NP; or by the substantive verb *bí*, when the attribute of subject expresses 'more temporal qualities, existence, location, possession and the like. Syntactically this means that its predicates include adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases' (Stenson, ibid). This is a clear case where one language, the TL, makes a distinction that another, the SL, does not. The distinction in Irish would not be of relevance at IS if the copula were not represented at this level. Indeed, the authors of the Eurotra Reference Manual concede that verbs like the copula are semantically empty, the real predication being left to the second argument, the attribute of subject (arg_AS), or, in the case of secondary predications, the attribute of object. Nevertheless, Eurotra 'legislation' stipulates that non-predicative copula verbs be represented at IS where they take two arguments - an arg1, the deep subject, and an arg_AS. Given the fact that the optimal solution of omitting the copula is not possible, the problem for English-Irish transfer relates to which verb should be selected to translate the English verb 'to be'.

One option would be to encode semantic information like that outlined above for the temporary vs. permanent nature of attributes of subjects, etc., by means of features at all ISs. Such a move would, however, constitute *anticipation*, as rejected above, and while such tailoring of English, for example, to meet the needs of Irish, and possibly Spanish and Portuguese (cf. *ser* vs. *estar*, etc.) might be warranted, it would be difficult to justify in the case of, for instance, English-German transfer. A second option would involve a type of *readjustment*. This would seem to be the course taken by the Spanish grammar writers, who use only a single lexical rule to translate the English verb 'to be':

(1) {gb_lu=be} => {e_lu=ser}.

Thus all structures governed by the English 'to be' will be governed by *ser* at IS in Spanish. It is left to the monolingual Spanish generation component to readjust the TL representations later on, on the basis of features that accompany certain phrasal categories and certain adjectives in Spanish. The Spanish solution works: but it does so at the expense of introducing the linguistically unmotivated 'super' lexical unit (l.u.) *ser* at IS and then having to replace this l.u. at lower levels in cases where it is actually wrong.

The solution adopted for Irish involves neither anticipation nor readjustment, but rather makes use of the Eurotra formalism itself. As well as containing a rule for the default (simple) translation of structures, the English-Irish transfer component contains two rules for translating the English lexical unit 'to be':

(2) {gb_lu=be} => {ir_lu=is}.
(3) {gb_lu=be} => {ir_lu=bí}.

Thus the translator at this level will deliver unto the generator at Irish IS two representations of any English construction governed by the verb 'to be', the two differing only in the choice of either *is* or *bí* in Irish. Such a treatment would suggest that the English sentence 'He is a man' could be translated as either *Is fear é*, or, to every Irish speaker's horror, **Tá sé fear*. Happily, representations output by translators are only putative. They must be either confirmed or abandoned by the relevant generator. Herein lies the solution to be problem. The Irish IS generator will not allow any structure where the attribute of the subject (the **predicate** in more familiar terminology) takes the form of a noun phrase to be governed by the verb *bí*. This is achieved by blocking this possibility, i.e., preventing unification from taking place, by ensuring that such structures have the correct lexical unit pre-specified as in the following structure-building rule at Irish IS:

```
(4)     {cat=sentence,....}
        [ {role=gov,cat=verb,ir_isframe=arg1_AS,ir_lu=is},
          {role=arg1, cat=np},
          {role=arg_AS,cat=np},
         *{} ].
```

It is not possible, however, to be so deterministic about structures containing the verb *bí*, as these patterns are shared by other verbs such as *breathnaigh* 'to seem', *éirigh* 'to become', etc. The lexical unit of the governor in such instances cannot be pre-inserted and so we have a slightly more general rule than in (4) above:

```
(5)     {cat=sentence,....}
        [ {role=gov,cat=verb,ir_isframe=arg1_AS},
          {role=arg1,cat=np},
          ({role=arg_AS,cat=ap};
          {role=arg_AS,cat=pp}),
         *{} ].2
```

The danger of course is that, on the basis of the lexical transfer rules (2) and (3) above, structure building rule (5) will permit sentences such as **Is sa chistin é* 'He is in the kitchen'. Even for cases where the boundaries between copular constructions and those using *bí* in Irish are quite fluid, as with certain adjectival predicates, the presence of two representations of a single English sentence, one with the governor *is*, the other with *bí*, is an undesirable instance of **overgeneration**. Here some sleight of hand is called for. The answer comes in the form of the ominously named **killer rule**. We can weed out representations where *is* occurs with an adjectival or prepositional phrase as the attribute of subject simply by specifying that such a structure be deleted after the generator has done all its other work! The solution to the problem of translating the English verb 'to be' may not seem elegant. It is, without doubt, based on generalisations and eliminates certain possible target language structures from the picture. This kind of **pre-determination**, however, is not uncommon in Machine Translation (see Hutchins and Somers 1992: 137-140) and the method employed does allow for all-important simple transfer. Examples where simple transfer cannot be achieved are discussed next.

COMPLEX TRANSFER
- CHANGING STRUCTURES AND LEXICAL FEATURES

Complex lexical transfer may be occasioned by phenomena as seemingly trivial as the presence of strongly bound prepositions. The English verb 'to pay' for example, subcategorises in one of its uses for a prepositional phrase headed by the preposition 'for'. The corresponding Irish verb *ioc* requires that the preposition be *as*. Now we cannot presume that 'for' always translates as *as*. The preposition selected in the TL of course depends on context. In this case we can say that the prepositional form required is a **feature** of the verb and in transfer treat it as such:

(6) {gb_lu=pay,gb_pformarg2=for} => {ir_lu=íoc,ir_pformarg2=as}.

The operation performed by the lexical transfer rule (6), where 'pformarg2' stands for 'prepositional form of the second argument', is quite simple. More interesting instances of complex transfer involve changes in structure from the SL to the TL. Such changes may have lexical origins, as in the case where the syntactic category of a TL lexical unit differs from that of the SL l.u. Thus the English demonstrative 'this' is typically treated as an adjective in Irish *seo*, and an explicit transfer rule is required to deal with this and the concomitant fact that certain English demonstrative phrases must be allowed to become adjectival phrases in the Irish:

(7) {gb_lu=this,cat=dem} => {ir_lu=seo,cat=adj}.

(8) {cat=demp} => {cat=ap}.

(9) DP:{cat=demp} [{cat=dem}] =>
DP: {cat=ap} [{role=gov,cat=adj}].

This and many other examples show the difficulties caused by retaining syntactic category information in abstract representations. The problem has been recognised in Eurotra (see Schmidt 1990), but on balance the advantages of keeping category information at IS were seen to outweigh the disadvantages.

Rule (9) is an example of an explicit complex structural transfer rule. Like the lexical transfer rules, it has a left-hand side and a right-hand side and a rewrite symbol '=>' in the middle. The difference is that a structural transfer rule shows changes not just in features but in trees as well. The capital letters that precede feature bundles serve to index them, carrying over any features that are not explicitly changed or deleted to the right-hand side and the angle brackets on the right-hand side of the rule indicate that this structure has not yet been confirmed by the Irish IS generator. The use of indices becomes particularly important in the case of argument switching, of which English-Irish translation provides many examples. The English verb 'to need', for instance, is translated in many cases by the Irish *teastaigh* which takes the English 'needer' as the object of a strongly-bound preposition *ó* and 'what is needed' in English as its subject. The translation of the lu 'need' is handled by a lexical transfer rule:

(10) {gb_lu=need} => {ir_lu=teastaigh,ir_pformarg2=ó}.

and the relevant structural changes by the rule:

```
(11) S:  {cat=sentence} [
         V: {gb_lu=need},
         ARG1: {role=arg1},
         Arg2: {role=arg2},
         REST: *{} ]              =>
S <      V: {ir_lu=teastaigh,ir_pformarg2=ó},
         ARG2: {role=arg1}, ARG1:{role=arg2},
         REST >.
```

where the indices are an economical means of reversing the order of feature bundles.

There are various other examples of where differences in syntactic category and differences in argument structure combine to make complex structural transfer inevitable. Translationally equivalent sentence pairs such as 'I am happy' and *Tá áthas orm* (Is happiness on-me); 'I regret' and *Tá aiféala orm* (Is regret on-me); etc., are familiar and will not be elaborated upon here. Suffice it to say that their preponderance no doubt has something to do with what has been called the 'noun-centredness' of Irish (Greene 1966: 31) and has implications for English-Irish MT. Finally, mention should be made of **lexical gaps** which occur when several TL items are required to translate a single SL item. Such gaps occur between every pair of languages and English and Irish are no different. Examples like 'to die'/*bás a fháil* (literally, to get death) abound. Their treatment in transfer involves the insertion into the Irish IS representation of a support verb, a semantically empty, non-predicative verb, which nevertheless carries information on tense and aspect etc.

On the whole, Eurotra's canonical representations seemed to be able to accommodate the Irish language quite well. In fact, the verb-first order of Irish seemed eminently compatible with the dependency structures upon which Eurotra interfaces are based. Any transfer problems between English and Irish were by no means peculiar to this language pair; all transfer pairs bear the burden or not of the presence of empty copular verbs, syntactic category information, etc., at IS. What did prove to be a problem for Irish were, surprisingly, the supposedly interlingual features devised to abstract away from the vagaries of surface tense, aspect and diathesis forms.

INTERLINGUAL ELEMENTS

It is well known that parallel surface forms are not always used to express the same temporal reality across languages. An example from the English-Irish translation pair illustrates a fairly typical phenomenon whereby an English present perfect corresponds to a simple present in another language given a particular context:

(12) I have been here since this morning.
Tá mé anseo ó mhaidin.

Obviously, with 72 language pairs, adopting a system of one-to-one mappings of SL to TL surface forms would be impracticable. For this reason a series of common extralingual features encoding tense and aspect meanings for all the diverse forms was devised which drew its inspiration from Reichenbach's (1947) classic treatment of the phenomenon based on symbolic logic. Just how these temporal meanings are computed is described in detail in Allegranza *et al.* (1991: 37-68). For the moment it is enough to say that if an interlingual temporal meaning has been assigned to an English sentence, for example, on the basis of monolingual analysis, then one would expect this interlingual meaning to translate into a familiar Irish surface form in generation. There are cases, however, where translationally equivalent English and Irish sentences cannot be said to have the same temporal meaning as indicated by Eurotra's interlingual features, a fact which of course casts doubt on their status as interlingual at all. An example will help clarify this point. While the treatment of tense and aspect in Eurotra aims to make it possible to study the interaction of these phenomena with other temporal expression, such as adverbs, temporal subclauses and prepositional phrases, there is no explicit link between tense and aspect and the processes subsumed under the term **diathesis**, i.e., activization, passivization, and impersonal and decausative constructions. Thus the 'meaning' of the sentence

(13) The government published a report.

may be represented as the predicative core of that sentence plus the features {tense=anterior, aspect=perfective, diathesis=active}, where the value 'anterior' corresponds normally to the meaning of the past tense and 'perfective' to the meaning of simple aspectual forms.[3] Retaining these interlingual features and combining them with the following predicative core for the equivalent Irish sentence: *foilsigh + rialtas + tuarascáil*, we could perhaps arrive at the surface form *D'fhoilsigh an rialtas tuarascáil*. But what of the passive sentence

(14) A report was published by the government.?

Such a sentence receives the same temporal meaning as (13) above; but the value for 'diathesis' naturally changes to 'passive'. Any attempt to carry over all the interlingual features imputed to the English sentence would probably result in the ill-formed **Foilsiodh tuarascáil ag an rialtas*. Irish simply cannot combine passivization (where an agent is made explicit in a by/*ag*-phrase as opposed to an impersonal where there is no explicit agent, although deep instruments may be specified) with perfective aspect.[4] We are forced therefore to make transfer complex and change the feature {diathesis=passive} to {diathesis=active} in Irish yielding once again *D'fhoilsigh an rialtas tuarascáil*. So much for interlingual features facilitating simple transfer! The alternative of somehow computing this surface sentence from a representation containing the feature {diathesis=passive} on the basis of more complex interlingua -> TL mappings seems intuitively badly motivated. The fact that the English-French transfer grammar also called for complex transfer because, while English language grammar writers considered forms such as 'He is sleeping' to be clearly imperfective, their French counterparts could not bring themselves to apply the same analysis to the equivalent *Il dort*, which they regarded as an unanalysable whole and hence perfective, shows just how difficult it is to abandon one's intuitions about one's own language for the rigours of even symbolic logic. Devising language-independent features for tense and aspect was a daunting task; but applying such features proved even more difficult.

Finally, a word should be said about that characteristic of Irish verbs that carries over so markedly into Hiberno-English, that is, the fact that indefinite cyclic iteration or **habituality** is *explicitly* marked on certain forms (cf. *Bíonn sé ag léamh* *'He does be reading'; *Théadh sé go dtí an leabharlann* 'He would/used to go to the library'). Now certain verbal forms in English are invariably interpreted as expressing habituality, while others are ambiguous say between future and habitual readings (cf. 'He drinks coffee' and 'He leaves at twelve', respectively). So habituality it not peculiar to Irish. The difference is, however, that while non-specification of habituality in English is often not fatal as ambiguities are inherent in certain forms anyway, as they can be in Irish too, the underspecification of temporal meaning in Irish means that forms which pervade the language will never be analysed as such or, worse still, generated. As Eurotra stood at the end of the research project, there was still no way of treating habituality as a component of time meaning. A possible formal semantic treatment of the phenomenon, along with non-iteration and periodic cyclic iteration, was proposed by van Eynde (1987). It is clear that any future endeavour in Natural Language Processing that aims to account for all possible temporal forms in Irish would do well to consider such a comprehensive approach.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that Irish is generally amenable to treatment within the Eurotra framework. Many problems encountered in transfer into Irish do not affect this language alone, although the refinements required to the treatment of temporal meaning do seem to be particularly important in the case of Irish. Any such refinements would, of course, stand to improve the system as a whole.

Footnotes

[1] The author would like to thank Jeremy Lindop at UMIST in Manchester for his invaluable help in implementing the grammars described in this paper.

[2] In the two building rules specified, dominance is indicated by the use of square brackets '[ ]'; precedence relations by the use of commas ',' between feature bundles; optionality by enclosing alternatives in parentheses '( )' and separating them with a semicolon. The Kleene star * before the unspecified feature bundles at the end of each rule indicates that any number (0 or more) of other feature bundles may also be present, as, for example, in cases where the predicative core of a sentence is qualified by any number of modifiers.

[3] The perfective traditionally depicts situations seen as a single unanalysable whole in contrast with the so-called imperfective which views a situation from the inside, focusing on its beginning, end or continuation (cf. Comrie 1976: 3-4).

[4] It is possible to have passive in conjunction with imperfective aspect however, as in the case of *Tá tuarascáil foilsithe ag an rialtas* (cf. Ó Siadhail 1989: 299).

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Developing Strategies and Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the success of a Work-Unit set up within the secondary school system in Spain amongst students learning English as a foreign language. Every effort was made to raise learners' awareness with regard to the strategies they use in order to help them learn better and above all to develop positive attitudes. The Work-Unit chosen was not part of a series but was chosen as a possible model based on a certain framework as outlined in The New Curriculum in Spain. Since the experiment was located in Galicia, the teachers decided to pick Ireland as the topic for the Unit. This was done principally because of the similarities between Glaicia and Ireland and to focus on an English speaking country with a different culture *vis-a-vis* Great Britain or the United States. History, Geography, Music and Literature were intergrated as part of the programme within the English classroom. Overall, the study shows that there has been an improvement in students' self-awareness about their own study habits. Learning strategies acquired within the English classroom were often transferred outside the classroom. It is argued, therefore, that teachers should help their students develop positive attitudes to other langauges and cultures by autonomous learning.

INTRODUCTION

In 1983, Carl Rogers stated that the primary task of the teacher is 'to permit a student to learn, to feed his/her curiosity'. Such a definition allows us to view teaching in a different perspective which is somewhat removed from the traditional viewpoint. It has also been stated that ineffective learning may be the result of using wrong strategies, but what exactly is meant by strategies? They must be defined before getting into more details. The term *strategy* has been used with different meanings and to refer to different concepts. Wenden (1987) noted that in the literature they had been referred to as: *techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, language processing strategies...*

Yet as early as 1975 Stern had pleaded for a consensus on the definition of the term and with this in mind suggested that it might be interesting to go back to the original meaning of the Greek word. But we, as educationalists, need to explain the concept within an educational context. We will therefore use the term **learning strategies**. O'Malley's (1990) definition has been recently accepted by most researchers. For him learning strategies are:

> 'the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information.'
>
> (O'Malley 1990:1)

However, Rebecca Oxford, in her recent book on learning strategies offers another definition:

> 'Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.'
> (R. Oxford, 1990, p. 8)

We detect in her definition the introduction of personal and affective factors. But in addition she also introduces another important element: their transferability.

Even though, as Oxford herself recognises, *learning strategies* have been used by people for thousands of years, they have been officially discovered and named recently. And it is apparently now when they are becoming a 'key' factor within the language instruction field. If it is difficult to find agreement as far as definition and classification is concerned, there is still another point of conflict and it is that of the possibility of learners being trained to use learning strategies and advantages that may ensue. It has been commonly agreed, both by researchers of S.L.A. and Cognitive Psychology, that effective learning demands the use of certain strategies, and even more, the transfer of those strategies already learnt to fit new problems. Following his broad study on strategies, O'Malley (1990) concluded that:

> 'Students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction and ability to review their progress, accomplishment and future learning directions.' (O'Malley 1990, : 99)

Metacognition, a term introduced by Flavell in 1970, refers to the capacity to know about one's cognitive process. As Nisbet (1981) proposes, understanding the strategies of learning helps us to control the processes of learning and take responsibility for our own learning. That idea exemplifies one of the main aims of learner training: To help learners to become more autonomous.

Various studies have been developed to find out the effectiveness of training people to use certain strategies: Bialystok (1981, 86), Hosenfeld (1981), O'Malley (1990), Oxford (1990), Rubin (1975), Wenden (1986, 91), Willing (1991), are some of the authors who dealt with learning strategies in different ways, but Wenden (1981) is probably the only one who focused on how learners can be helped to plan their learning. It also provides some guidelines for those who somehow want to help students to learn how to learn.

There are two questions which remain to be answered: *how* and *when* should a ***Learning to Learn*** Program be introduced?

With regard to **how**, there are two options:

1) Is it better to inform students about the nature of the activity, the strategies to be used? (what O'Malley calls *Direct Instruction*) or
2) Should learners ignore it and work on activities using the strategies referred to in the textbook? (What O'Malley calls *Embedded instruction*).

We agree that *Direct Instruction* should be used, as there is evidence that when students are not informed little transfer to new tasks takes place. On the contrary, when students are given information about the strategies being learnt they will not only use them in the training setting (the classroom) but they will also use them over time and in a variety of situations and tasks.

In relation to the last question, **when,** we could find very little research in the literature reviewed. For some authors, the ideal level is secondary education or college-level, as that is the age when individuals feel the need to be more autonomous in their learning. But that argument is not a valid one as there is evidence that not all students want to be autonomous (individual differences exist). Besides, it could be too late as most individuals have developed a lot of habits by that time. The primary school is being proposed as the starting point to introduce learner training in spite of Burner's hypothesis that 'any subject can be taught efficiently in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development'. Up to the present many experiments have been carried out at primary school level and most of them, though some are not published, have been successful. In any case we thought that our secondary school students could perfectly undertake that process and follow a ***Learning to Learn program***. That is why we decided to design a Unit of Work based on the assumptions above mentioned and try to raise learners' awareness on which strategies they use and which others would help them to learn better and develop positive attitudes. The main point is that the learners are considered to have an active role in their learning process and if they are responsible for it, we can assume that they become autonomous. We understand by *autonomy* 'the capability to take charge of one's own language learning' as Holec (1983) defines the term. As Little (1991) puts it:

> 'Essentially, autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action... The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts.' (Little, 1991:4)

We did not forget that although the learner should become responsible for their own learning and that as Stevick thinks 'there can be learning without teaching', we as teachers should look at the way in which teaching and learning interact. According to Brown,

> 'teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning.' (Brown, 1987, p.7)

METHOD

At this stage it should be said that the Workunit we set up was not designed as a 'study' and that is why it does not probably involve the 'full rigour' of Research Methods. But if we follow Nunan's (1992) definition of Research, we can consider our work to be research.

> 'a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of the data.' (Nunan, 1992 : 3)

We had a question and obtained some data which were analysed and interpreted. Our question was: *would students be able to reflect on /develop some strategies which would facilitate their learning?*

The subjects

We experimented with materials amongst secondary school students randomly chosen: They were 15-16 year-old boys and girls learning English as a Foreign Language. All of them used both Spanish and Galician (the L1 was Galician for some of them and Spanish for some others). For most of them English was a *hard to learn language* and for some of those having Galician as their L1, English was an *imperialistic language*. What that means is that they were not highly motivated.

THE UNIT

Perhaps the first thing to be mentioned is that this Unit of work was not part of a series. It was created on its own as a possible model based on a framework determined by the *new curriculum in Spain* and the *learning principles* mentioned in the previous section. But other facts were also considered:

1. - The Unit was planned for students taking secondary school studies within the new Spanish Education Reform.
2. - The main aims for the Learning of the foreign languages established in the Spanish Basic Curriculum:

   1. - To provide learners with the knowledge, skills and strategies required to communicate with people from other countries and cultures and hence to be able to appreciate other ways of existence and thinking.
   2. - To promote the development of the whole person.

   Both aims resemble the two main reasons mentioned by Dubin and Olshtein (1986) in support of having foreign languages included within the educational system.
   - a) To facilitate communication with the rest of humanity,
   - b) to allow for the individual's development and growth.

THE TOPIC

Following the aims mentioned, we chose **'English Around the World: Ireland'** as the topic and title for the Unit. The idea was to make students aware of the fact of English being spoken by different people in different countries and in different ways; to show students that English is spoken in countries other than just Great Britain and that behind a language there are many different people and cultures.

We chose Ireland because we considered it to be a country that resembles Galicia in many ways: geography, history, and in both countries there are two official languages. We hoped that this would promote further reflection on other cultures by the students and by doing so, compare their own with the foreign culture. It would also offer the possibility of integrating other subjects within the English classroom (Geography, History, Music, Literature) as we think learning does not take place in isolation and students have to feel that language is a *vehicle*.

THE MODEL OF SYLLABUS

When designing the Unit we followed a Type B syllabus, with some influences from a *process syllabus* model and from a *procedural syllabus* model, as the Unit was built both around the learner's learning preferences, and at the same time, bearing in mind SLA theory and research. The rational was then educational rather than linguistic.

THE MATERIALS

Most of the materials we used for the Unit are authentic. We got as many tapes, books, brochures and photos on Ireland as possible: its Geography, History, Music, Literature, costumes etc. At the same time students had to use as many resources as they could in order to offer the Galician side when required.

Although most of the time materials were used as they were, in some cases they were adapted for the purpose of the activity.

THE ACTIVITIES

The four activities presented here are just an example of all those included in the Unit. They cover two of the subjects: Geography and Literature. They show examples of some of the learning strategies we tried students to reflect on or develop: *co-operating with others, empathising with others (developing cultural understanding), using different resources, creating mental linkages,* and *guessing intelligently* are the ones dealt with in the following activities.

Activity 1.- *Geography.*

Aims: To stimulate previous knowledge and introduce the topic.
To use visual aids to promote *speaking/writing*.
To help learners to use/develop strategies to work with a map, to get information from different sources and to co-operate with others working in groups.

Skills: The skills involved are *Listening/Speaking and Reading*.

Suggested material: Real photos/posters of Ireland, Galicia and very few of other countries. The photos can be displayed around the classroom and used for other activities later.

Procedure: 1. - Students move around the classroom and look at the photos which have been previously numbered. Then, the teacher asks questions about the photos
Where is it (photo 1, 2, 3...)***?***
What country is it?

2. - Once all the photos have been identified students are asked about all the English speaking countries they know.

3. - Students are asked about Ireland. How much do they know about it? In groups they have to try to say as much as they can. All the information is put together and then the teacher will try to elicit from students how much information they share and how much they were able to get from the photos.

4. - Students are given a map of Ireland and by just using the map they will have to add some more information about the country. The idea is to help learners to 'read a map', to get information from different sources. The teacher can work out an example if it is considered necessary (i.e. big/small towns and cities indicated by different symbols).

Activity 2. - *Geography*

Aims: To review/learn new vocabulary related to geographical features.
To brainstorm some possible words.
To develop memory strategies: *creating mental linkages* (photo-word, or any other) in order to facilitate learning words.

Material: The same photos as used before.

Procedure:

1. -Students try to write individually as many words as they know related to geographical features: *mountain*, *hill*, *waterfall*, *valley*...
2. - After finding the 'general' vocabulary of the whole classroom the teacher will introduce as many new words as he/she considers necessary. For that purpose the photos will be used.
   - Suggestions will be made to students concerning the use of visual associations in order to remember words.

Activity 3.- *Literature*

Aims: Another way of learning words, this time by using word chains, will be practised with an activity on *Literature*: How many words related to *Literature* can you remember?

Skill: *Writing/Speaking*.

Procedure:

1. - Students are requested to think about as many words as they can related to *Literature*.
2. -An example is being offered and then they should try to continue the chain as long as they can.

↙ Novel
LITERATURE
↓ Play

3. -After a few minutes, the teacher elicits all the possible terms from the whole group.

Activity 4(a).- *Literature*

Aims: To help learners to develop/use a compensation strategy (*guessing intelligently*) to facilitate listening (in this case to obtain specific information from a recorded text)
To encourage *taking notes* (a cognitive strategy).

Skills: *Listening, Writing* (note taking)

Material: A tape with a recorded conversation
A table for students to fill in.

Procedure:

1. - There is a pre-listening stage in which students are told they are going to listen to some people (a radio program on *Literature*) talking about some Galician and Irish writers. They will have to predict: *What do they think the speakers are going to mention?* Focus can be on vocabulary, structures, etc.
2. - The following step will be to check if their predictions were right while listening to the tape.
3. - The students will try to complete the table by listening to the tape again.

Activity 4(b).- *Literature*

Aims: -To make learners reflect on the strategies they use to facilitate reading.
- To encourage the reading of literary texts. Do they already guess intelligibly? Do they use linguistic and non-linguistic clues?
- To develop a positive attitude towards Reading

Skills: Reading/Speaking

Procedure:

1. - Students are given a short text from *The Dead*. They will just be told the passage belongs to one of the stories in **Dubliners** (the whole list of the stories in **Dubliners** is provided: *The Sisters, An Encounter, Araby, Eveline, The Dead.*
2. - Students will then read the passage silently.
3. - In groups they will try to answer the following questions:
   - What is the passage about?
   - What do you think about it?
   - Did you like it?
   - Could you say which of the stories it belongs to? Why?
4. - The whole class will work together showing the different opinions in the different groups.
5. - The teacher will now focus students' attention on some words (words selected previously as they are considered to be new for the learners).
   - How can they work out their meaning? By using their **form, their function**, the **immediate context**, **a wider context?**

THE RESULTS

Previous to the use of the material involved in the Unit presented here we had noticed:

a) Some students did not like the idea of learning a foreign language because it was 'another' language in the school curriculum.
b) English was identified as the language spoken in Great Britain and they seemed to consider British culture as being unfamiliar and 'strange'. That implied a negative attitude towards the subject.
c) Students were not aware of the learning strategies they used and in most cases they did not use too many.

We obtained the data through classroom observation and verbal report.

In order to get information about students' development of learning strategies we observed learners while performing the activities of the Unit. Retrospective self-reports were also used: open-ended reports, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

After interpreting the data the result was:

- Students had learnt about another culture which was completely unknown to them and which appealed to them.
- Those who found 'reading' difficult and tended to try to identify every single word, found it a bit easier. Some of them reported that they had experimented "a change": now they could read faster and a bit more easily on their own out of the classroom (magazines in English, brochures, instructions...).
- Guessing was found to be useful not only while reading but also when listening to 'real' English (songs, satellite T.V., radio, etc.)
- They had realised they were able to use different resources in order to get information themselves without the teacher's help.
- Most of them admitted finding the activities interesting and that all subjects should involve them in a similar process.

It can be said that students became aware of the benefit of using some learning strategies and that in many cases they were able to use them themselves out of the classroom. They also said they had enjoyed the activities and reported to have 'discovered' a wonderful country.

CONCLUSION

Although the experiment did not have the pattern and rigour of what is commonly understood by *Research Method* and no statistical analysis was applied to the data obtained, we can still come to some conclusions. The results indicate that there has been some improvement: students have become aware of the learning strategies which were part of the objectives of the activities included in our Unit. In some cases they even transferred those strategies to out of the classroom situations.

Consequently, it is our belief that the experience presented in this paper demonstrates how we should go about helping learners learn and change the present situation in which *Learning how to Learn* still remains a secondary matter in many foreign language classes. From these pages we would like to encourage other teachers to carry out similar experiences and to continue researching in such a fascinating area. Let's help our students to develop positive attitudes to other cultures, other languages and learning itself and by doing so to learn in a more efficient autonomous way.

We would like to finish by quoting an ancient proverb which captures in an intuitive way what has resulted from our study:

> ***Give a man a fish and he eats for a day***
> ***Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime***

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Review of Leslie Dickinson, **Learner Autonomy. 2: Learner Training for Language Learning**. Authentic Language Learning Resources Ltd., Trinity College, Dublin, 1992. Pp. iv + 67. ISBN 1 - 871730 - 06 - 6.

Éanna Mac Cába
Coláiste Phádraig
Baile Átha Cliath

Most countries nowadays for a whole variety of reasons make an enormous investment in the study and teaching of languages. All who might be involved in the process will welcome any educational innovation which improves the effectiveness of the task. In the publication under review, the focus is decidedly on the language learner in terms of the actual learning activity. This slim and compact work is a follow-on to Vol. 1 in the series which, in the words of the preface by David Little, was concerned with 'basic definitions, the principal sources of autonomy theory, and the broad implications of the theory for pedagogical practice', while Vol. 2 is offered as 'an introduction to the arguments in favour of learner training and as a first guide to the techniques involved'. In fact the book endeavours to undertake a large task, that is to describe 'how we can help language learners to learn how to learn' and claims an improvement in learning effectiveness when such an approach is adopted.

While presenting a comprehensive formulation of the concepts and strategies involved, the author does at the same time recognise that in adopting this approach the teacher 'is doing something that language teachers the world over have done for many years without recognising that they are engaged in learner training' (p. 6).

Two aspects need to be highlighted. Firstly, it is made clear that the book is directed at the teacher rather than the learner. Secondly - and this is not made explicit - the approaches that are advocated are more suitable for the post-primary age group and beyond, possibly being even more suited to the adult language learner. Much of it, however, could no doubt be adapted to the needs of the younger learners who are no less prone to boredom and feelings of futility in the face of monotonous repetition and lacklustre teaching styles and strategies in the language class.

After clarifying what learning training is about and making the necessary distinction between learner training as against autonomy, the main part of the text then deals with learner training techniques, language awareness and finally language learning awareness. Language teachers who may not yet have reflected on or articulated the kinds of ideas and approaches shown here stand to benefit from engaging with them. The approach is philosophically rooted in, I believe, the valid endeavour to make the process of language learning as authentic as is possible psychologically and pedagogically. The most compelling outcome that follows from this is the obligation which it places on teachers and course designers not alone to take into account the needs of the learner but also to become aware of them as fully as possible.

Among the considerations, one suspects, that would arise for teachers in face of being encouraged to adopt this approach might well be the time factor or indeed the degree of control and involvement left to the teacher. As regards the latter, the opposite, in fact would be the case as its organisation, design and implementation will still depend on the expertise and skill of the teacher. In the case of the former, any change in the utilisation and planning of the time element becomes relative when success is being engendered.

Success in learning the target language being the ultimate aim for pupil and teacher alike, and faced with real options as to approaches to that task, one is reminded of the choice thrown up in the well-known story of the man who is hungry: whether to give him his meal of fish now or, rather, teach him how to fish! The true educator, without doubt, would have no difficulty in making the correct choice.

Review of Máire Owens, **The Acquisition of Irish: A Case Study**. Multilingual Matters 72. Series Editor: Derrick Sharp. Multilingual Matters Ltd, Clevedon/Philadelphia/Adelaide, 1992. Pp. ix+225. ISBN 1-85359-113-0 (pbk).

Máire Ní Neachtain
Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál
Luimneach

This book, based on research which was presented for an M. Litt. degree at Trinity College Dublin, gives an account of the acquisition of Irish as a second language by the author's daughter Eithne over a period of thirteen months from the time Eithne was four years and eight months to when she was five years and nine months. In 1986 the Centre for Language and Communication Studies at TCD published a paper which laid the foundation for this study. It outlined some of the strategies used by Eithne to manipulate the amount of language in her control, traced the origins of a verbal system and described some aspects of the systematic building-up of a new language. This book expands on some of the issues raised in that paper, concentrating mainly on the acquisition of the verbal system and discussing the acquisition of certain verb-related elements such as pronouns, prepositional pronouns, verbal noun complements, negatives and questions.

The data were collected by recording conversations between the author and the subject on a domestic tape recorder and then transcribed. Extracts from the transcripts, with a translation are given as an Appendix in the book, and the transcripts are reproduced in full in the unpublished dissertation in TCD.

Eithne was first exposed to Irish in a systematic way when she began to attend a Naíonra (a pre-school play group through the medium of Irish) at the age of three years and two months. The beginning and ending of the recordings coincided with Owens' postgraduate research work, beginning when, while searching for a research topic, she realised she had a data source at her disposal, equal to that provided by the children for Brown's (1973) pioneering work and ending at a stopping place deemed convenient by Owens.

A very clear picture is given of Eithne's social and linguistic profile, her attitude and motivation, of her family's background and circumstances, their interest and ability in Irish, and very critically the amount of exposure to the second language, reckoned by Owens to be a maximum of 1,500 hours. During the period of analysis Eithne attended a Naíonra and then went to an all-Irish school.

The analysis of the data was essentially informal. It became obvious to Owens during the transcription that the progress was most clearly to be seen in the development of the verbal system, and she decided to observe the strategies and formal markers used by Eithne to express verb-related functions and notions over the period studied.

The irregular verbs accounted for 50% of Eithne's usage, yet she was not put off by the existence of the variations in the irregular verbs nor did she use strategies to avoid them. By the end of the period Eithne displayed a comprehensive ability to cope with a wide range of verbs in a wide range of contexts, beginning with very few in the first sessions, ending with clusters in the last ones. In her answering system, though some dependent verb forms were overextended - *bhfuair, bhfaca, raibh* occasionally - it is noteworthy that there was never any attempt to isolate *bhfuil*. Owens suggests that Eithne may have viewed it as an intergral part of *cá bhfuil, an bhfuil* or because her ability to use *tá* was developed from a much earlier stage and was quite secure.

As Owens (p. 100) clearly states, Eithne quickly achieved control of the present, past and future progressive in a wide range of verbs and easily expressed such a range of time differences with a minimum of formal variation, with only the auxiliary needing to be modified. Simple past forms appeared in verbs which typified simple completed actions e.g. *thit, bhris,* where there was no hint of duration. Duration was stressed by using a progressive form unless simple past was very obvious, but the simple past spread to other verbs and the progressive was limited to its target parameters.

In the first two months, with the exception of *oscail,* only first conjugation verbs emerge and throughout the period second conjugation verbs are rare. In my own research (Ní Neachtain 1991) on the acquisition of Irish as a first language a similar point was noted, *oscail* and *breathnaigh* being the first of the second conjugation verbs to emerge.

Owens refers to the salience of the verbal noun and that it gives an insight into Eithne's processing rules. Eithne produced incorrect forms such as *dulfaidh* and *léamhann;* similar evidence is recorded in Ní Neachtain 1991 with instances of *léamhfaidh* and *ráfaidh* produced by the subject whose first language was Irish.

Eithne curiously isolated the first conjugation future morpheme *-idh* and overextended its use to provide deviant forms of verbs, but it was gradually abandoned and Eithne moved closer to the correct form in its appropriate function. Owens perceives this over-extension as being a step on the way to acquiring the future marker. The present morpheme *-ann* does not appear to have been over-extended. Further research with other subjects would indicate if this is a universal strategy used by speakers or one particular to Eithne.

The copula was one area in which Eithne made little progress. This marks an interesting difference in the acquisition of Irish as a first language and as a second language. In two studies on Irish as L1 by McKenna and Wall and Mac Mathúna, both quoted by Owens, the copula was an early acquisition and no errors such as Eithne's were recorded. In Ní Neachtain 1991 the subject had control of the substantive and the copula from an early stage; yet Owens points out that mistakes can be heard from native speakers on Raidió na Gaeltachta and suggests that it is an interlingual overgeneralisation or a language internal shift. More data is clearly needed from a variety of subjects with Irish as L1 and L2 to decide the norm in this particular case.

Eithne displayed an inability to distinguish between male and female pronouns *sé* and *sí* and with the exception of a few imperatives the second person plural didn't emerge. Ownes suggests that she wasn't in a position of addressing a group of people in Irish; yet Ní Neachtain 1991 also noted the absence of the second plural pronoun. Eithne didn't follow the pattern or acquisition of pronouns proposed by Hickey (1985) quoted by Owens, where children with Irish as L1 were studied, but as Owens correctly points out Eithne, being older and having experience of the deictic features of *I/me* and *you*, may have had a bearing on this point.

It would have been of interest if the acquisition of prepositional pronouns had been studied in greater detail as they play such an important role in the language.

Eithne progressed from using *níl* for all types of negatives utterances to an awareness and an attempt to add a tense element. There was no difficulty in finding the position of the negative in the sentence. The Irish system is simple compared with the English one and once discovered by Eithne she refined the details without ever attempting to impose L1 structure on any of the elements.

Eithne very quickly distinguished between a wide range of preverbal particles, though bearing very little stress and similar in form, and her development of both questions and negatives shows a gradual progression from a very simple basic format, using both analysed and unanalysed segments to more complex constructions.

All in all Eithne shows remarkably little L1 influence. Initially code-switching was used as a strategy when pressed or stuck for a means of expression. Later lapses into English were caused by lack of experience of Irish in certain contexts, and she preferred to keep the two languages separate.

This analysis has provided insights into the acquisition of Irish in general and confirms what has been observed in studies of other languages. What is of great importance is that this child was acquiring a second language with limited exposure, a mere fraction of that experienced by a child acquiring a first language, and no problems relating to the minority status or limited use of Irish were encountered. This point is of particular interest to anyone dealing with Irish, teachers and parents in all-Irish schools especially.

This is a very important book. Child language acquisition is now a huge research area, yet in its infancy within the Irish language. More data is needed, and analysis must be made of a variety of speakers under a variety of conditions before rules or operating principals can be laid down for the acquisition of Irish. Máire Owens has made a very valuable contribution and the data will be of great benefit to other researchers for comparative purposes.

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Éanna Mac Cába
Coláiste Phádraig
Baile Átha Cliath.

The paper under review is a short booklet in the series of occasional papers under the general editorship of David G. Little.

As the title indicates, the purpose of this paper is to show that, by introducing problem solving to the core methodology of teaching English as a second or foreign language, the performance and linguistic competence of learners as compared with teaching through conventional methods was improved. The central claim being made is that the traditional or conventional approach to language does not seem to have worked very well. It is perceived as being 'seriously flawed'. The problem solving approach, on the other hand, rectifies these shortcomings to a large degree and brings gains to the learner. An account is given of the background, motivation, teaching procedures and the experimental design and, finally, the test results and conclusions relating to research undertaken by the author are reported in this paper.

The approach being argued for, derives from the hypothesis first proposed by Winits and Reeds (1975, p. 13) 'that language learning is essentially a problem-solving activity - a view implicit in Chomskyan theory and supported by later psycholinguistic research, which takes the view that "the central learning process for acquiring a language is hypothesis testing", (p.2) (Seliger 1988). Thus we are implicitly brought right into the centre of what has been a continuing debate about the nature of language acquisition, linguistic theory, and cognitive development.

This highly interesting experiment took as its starting point a distinction which can be drawn between two kinds of problem solving activities in the language classroom. In the words of the author, 'the use of problem solving as a communicative interactive technique in EFL/ESL teaching has been advocated by several writers ... and this type of task-based problem solving has by now become well established in the L2 classroom', (p.1). He is, however, concerned with another kind of linguistic problem solving which he states 'is much less widely known, viz. grammatical problem solving in the narrow sense of syntax'. In elaborating this distinction he outlines the salient features which the approach incorporates and which 'from a "communicative" viewpoint might be regarded as ineffective in promoting L2 development' (p.1). These features which are listed (p.1) are crucial to the pedagogy to be adopted and required quite a fundamental shift of approach on the part of the teacher, involving in respect of the language materials a move away from an ordered progression through examples of an idealised form of language and, furthermore, a move towards more optimal participation by the learner on the basis of real choices through a form of guided discovery process.

In arguing for the merits and potential of this approach many positive benefits are adduced. Many, if not all, of these benefits will be immediately recognised as desirable elements of educational and pedagogic practice as promoted nowadays. This, in itself, lends a high degree of importance to the paper as many of those involved with language teaching will be keenly aware of the challenge of moving beyond the perceived limitations imposed by the more traditional approaches, approaches which, characteristically, give the teacher an undue centrality and engage the students in learning rules of language usage which are inherently prescriptive statements or lists of structures and so on, based on the assumption that grammar is 'received' in prefabricated chunks or what has been called 'accumulated units'. These particular aspects are encapsulated in the statement that 'a problem-solving approach to grammar is a model of learning'. (p.3).

Problem solving in this context is an approach which is based on 'discovery'. Learners must play an active part in discovering significant facts for themselves and work inductively towards a solution, using tools given for the job, ('such as examples, hints, feedback, etc.'). They have to think and make decisions working either individually or in a group, and their attention is focused for teacher input. This process is characterised, among other things, by the elements of choice and risk taking. In this mode, 'language learning is thus viewed as a cognitive event which does not violate the natural process of language acquisition' (p.3).

If it appears from the foregoing that large claims are being made for the problem solving approach, this is indeed the case. There is throughout, however, a carefully balanced description of the thesis being proposed, its genesis, and the context in which it was tried and tested. The bulk of the paper is given over to a cogent description of the actual procedures and methods adopted in the classroom, the design of the experiment, and finally, the testing of results followed by a discussion of these. The results, to say the least, are impressive: 'In the "competence" test the experimental group achieved a mean gain of almost 60% from pre-test to post-test, whereas the control group achieved a mean gain of only 16%. In the "performance" test the experimental group achieved a mean gain of over 40% from pre-test to post-test, whereas the control group achieved a mean gain of only 4.5%' (p.19). A further 'paired t-test' confirmed that there was a statistically significant gain between the pre- and post-test value of the test data with significantly greater gain scores achieved by the experimental group on both 'competence' and 'performance' tests, thus indicating 'a clear advantage for learners employing problem solving' (id.).

The actual methods and ingenious tasks used in the classroom were drawn from the new types of grammar texts which have appeared in recent years and are seen to be stimulating and challenging. They are described in detail in the paper and placed in their theoretical contexts. They revolve around two complementary processes, viz. 'rule-getting' and 'rule-using' procedures. The author states that similar approaches could be applied to word level, phrase level, sentence level and text level and further suggests that this approach and design could be made to work equally well with more complex features such as tenses, modal verbs, and relative clauses..

The modern language teacher will probably be familiar to some extent with most of the activities which are utilised for the problems solving task. These would tend to be used towards the end of the language lesson in the 'application' stage or, perhaps, in the testing phase. What is interesting and new here is that they are placed in a carefully structured way at the core of the lesson and are used to trigger a whole set of inter-related processes and outcomes, all of which are deemed to be enriching both linguistically and educationally. The arguments are convincing.

It is, perhaps, appropriate at this stage to note that while the author is working from a theoretically enriched and sophisticated base, his claims are grounded in personal experience and understanding of the classroom situation and are judiciously presented throughout, showing an awareness of the needs of the learner on the one hand and the practical possibilities on the other. Care is taken with the necessary distinctions to do with feasibility which have to be taken into account, e.g. age and background of the learners, the context of the course etc. While conclusions and claims for the impressive results are presented with a note of caution, the empirical evidence cannot be gainsaid.

To explore the relationships between the areas of language learning, linguistic theory and cognitive development may well be for some to enter a very dark forest indeed. The language teacher as practitioner, however, strives to help learners to achieve the best possible 'outcomes' as authentically as possible and, hopefully, will manage an integration between practitioner experience and 'lore' and proven insights from relevant disciplines (hopefully keeping both the wood and the trees in mind!). The task is multidimensional and diverse and, there remains, at the very least, the challenge of making up the deficit which continues to exist between the insights gained from developments in modern theoretical linguistics on the one hand, and classroom practice in language teaching on the other. This paper makes a remarkable and welcome contribution to the task and manages to be informative and integrative in a mode of discourse which lends itself to the specialist and non-specialist reader alike.

Ag Cur Alt ar Aghaidh le Foilsiú i dTEANGA

Eolas Ginearálta

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